THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI VOLUME II

THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

EDITED AND TRANSLATED BY JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CELLINI BY THE SAME HAND TOGETHER WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO THIS EDITION UPON BENVENUTO CELLINI, ARTIST AND WRITER, BY ROYAL CORTISSOZ WITH REPRODUCTIONS OF FORTY ORIGINAL PORTRAITS AND VIEWS ILLUSTRATING THE LIFE

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BOOK FIRST

[CONTINUED]

THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI

BOOK FIRST

[CONTINUED]

CI

WHILE I was engaged in prosecuting my affairs with so much vigour, there arrived a letter sent post-haste to me by the Cardinal of Ferrara, which ran as follows: "Benvenuto, "our dear friend,—During these last days the most "Christian King here made mention of you, and said "that he should like to have you in his service. "Whereto I answered that you had promised me, "whenever I sent for you to serve his Majesty, that "you would come at once. His Majesty then an- "swered: 'It is my will that provision for his jour- "ney, according to his merits, should be sent him;' "and immediately ordered his Admiral to make me "out an order for one thousand golden crowns upon "the treasurer of the Exchequer. The Cardinal de' "Gaddi, who was present at this conversation, ad- "vanced immediately, and told his Majesty that it was "not necessary to make these dispositions, seeing that "he had sent you money enough, and that you were "already on the journey. If then, as I think probable, "the facts are quite contrary to those assertions of "Cardinal Gaddi, reply to me without delay upon "the receipt of this letter; for I will undertake to "gather up the fallen thread, and have the promised "money given you by this magnanimous King."

Now let the world take notice, and all the folk that dwell on it, what power malignant stars with adverse fortune exercise upon us human beings! I had not spoken twice in my lifetime to that little simpleton of a Cardinal de' Gaddi; nor do I think that he meant by this bumptiousness of his to do me any harm, but only, through light-headedness and senseless folly, to make it seem as though he also held the affairs of artists, whom the King was wanting, under his own personal supervision, just as the Cardinal of Ferrara did. But afterwards he was so stupid as not to tell me anything at all about the matter; elsewise, it is certain that my wish to shield a silly mannikin from reproach, if only for our country's sake, would have made me find out some excuse to mend the bungling of his foolish self-conceit.

Immediately upon the receipt of Cardinal Ferrara's letter, I answered that about Cardinal de' Gaddi I knew absolutely nothing, and that even if he had made overtures of that kind to me, I should not have left Italy without informing his most reverend lordship. I also said that I had more to do in Rome than at any previous time; but that if his Most Christian Majesty made sign of wanting me, one word of his, communicated by so great a prince as his most reverend lordship, would suffice to make me set off upon the spot, leaving all other concerns to take their chance.

After I had sent my letter, that traitor, the Perugian workman, devised a piece of malice against me, which succeeded at once, owing to the avarice of Pope Paolo da Farnese, but also far more to that of

his bastard, who was then called Duke of Castro.[1] The fellow in question informed one of Signor Pier Luigi's secretaries that, having been with me as workman several years, he was acquainted with all my affairs, on the strength of which he gave his word to Signor Pier Luigi that I was worth more than eighty thousand ducats, and that the greater part of this property consisted in jewels, which jewels belonged to the Church, and that I had stolen them in Castel Sant' Agnolo during the sack of Rome, and that all they had to do was to catch me on the spot with secrecy.

It so happened that I had been at work one morning, more than three hours before daybreak, upon the trousseau of the bride I mentioned; then, while my shop was being opened and swept out, I put my cape on to go abroad and take the air. Directing my steps along the Strada Giulia, I turned into Chiavica, and at this corner Crespino, the Bargello, with all his constables, made up to me, and said: "You are the Pope's prisoner." I answered: "Crespino, you have mistaken your man." "No," said Crespino, "you are the artist Benvenuto, and I know you well, and I have to take you to the Castle of Sant' Angelo, where lords go, and men of accomplishments, your peers." Upon that four of his under-officers rushed on me, and would have seized by force a dagger which I wore, and some rings I carried on my finger; but Crespino rebuked them: "Not a man of you shall touch him: it is quite enough if you perform your duty, and see that he does not escape

[1] *He had been invested with the Duchy of Castro in* 1537.

me." Then he came up, and begged me with words of courtesy to surrender my arms. While I was engaged in doing this, it crossed my mind that exactly on that very spot I had assassinated Pompeo. They took me straightway to the castle, and locked me in an upper chamber in the keep. This was the first time that I ever smelt a prison up to the age I then had of thirty-seven years.

CII

Signor Pier Luigi, the Pope's son, had well considered the large sum for which I stood accused; so he begged the reversion of it from his most holy father, and asked that he might have the money made out to himself. The Pope granted this willingly, adding that he would assist in its recovery. Consequently, after having kept me eight whole days in prison, they sent me up for examination, in order to put an end if possible to the affair. I was summoned into one of the great halls of the papal castle, a place of much dignity. My examiners were, first, the Governor of Rome, called Messer Benedetto Conversini of Pistoja,[1] who afterwards became Bishop of Jesi; secondly, the Procurator-Fiscal, whose name I have forgotten;[2] and, thirdly, the judge in criminal cases, Messer Benedetto da Cagli. These three men began at first to question me in gentle terms, which afterwards they changed to words of considerable harshness and menace, apparently because I said to them: "My lords, it is more than half-an-hour now since

[1] *Bishop of Forlimpopoli in* 1537, *and of Jesi in* 1540.

[2] *Benedetto Valenti.*

you have been pestering me with questions about fables and such things, so that one may truly say you are chattering or prattling; by chattering I mean talking without reason, by prattling I mean talking nonsense: therefore I beg you to tell me what it really is you want of me, and to let me hear from your lips reasonable speech, and not jabberings or nonsense." In reply to these words of mine, the Governor, who was a Pistojan, could no longer disguise his furious temper, and began: "You talk very confidently, or rather far too arrogantly; but let me tell you that I will bring your pride down lower than a spaniel by the words of reason you shall hear from me; these will be neither jabberings nor nonsense, as you have it, but shall form a chain of arguments to answer which you will be forced to tax the utmost of your wits." Then he began to speak as follows: "We know for certain that you were in Rome at the time when this unhappy city was subject to the calamity of the sack; at that time you were in this Castle of Sant' Angelo, and were employed as bombardier. Now since you are a jeweller and goldsmith by trade, Pope Clement, being previously acquainted with you, and having by him no one else of your profession, called you into his secret counsels, and made you unset all the jewels of his tiaras, mitres, and rings; afterwards, having confidence in you, he ordered you to sew them into his clothes. While thus engaged, you sequestered, unknown to his Holiness, a portion of them, to the value of eighty thousand crowns. This has been told us by one of your workmen, to whom you disclosed the matter in your

braggadocio way. Now, we tell you frankly that you must find the jewels, or their value in money: after that we will release you."

CIII

When I heard these words, I could not hold from bursting into a great roar of laughter; then, having laughed awhile, I said: "Thanks be to God that on this first occasion, when it has pleased His Divine Majesty to imprison me, I should not be imprisoned for some folly, as the wont is usually with young men. If what you say were the truth, I run no risk of having to submit to corporal punishment, since the authority of the law was suspended during that season. Indeed, I could excuse myself by saying that, like a faithful servant, I had kept back treasure to that amount for the sacred and holy Apostolic Church, waiting till I could restore it to a good Pope, or else to those who might require it of me; as, for instance, you might, if this were verily the case." When I had spoken so far, the furious Governor would not let me conclude my argument, but exclaimed in a burst of rage: "Interpret the affair as you like best, Benvenuto; it is enough for us to have found the property which we had lost; be quick about it, if you do not want us to use other measures than words." Then they began to rise and leave the chamber; but I stopped them, crying out: "My lords, my examination is not over; bring that to an end, and go then where you choose." They resumed their seats in a very angry temper, making as though they did not mean to listen to a word I said, and at the same time

half relieved,[1] as though they had discovered all they wanted to know. I then began my speech, to this effect: "You are to know, my lords, that it is now some twenty years since I first came to Rome, and I have never been sent to prison here or elsewhere." On this that catchpole of a Governor called out: "And yet you have killed men enough here!" I replied: "It is you that say it, and not I; but if some one came to kill you, priest as you are, you would defend yourself, and if you killed him, the sanctity of law would hold you justified. Therefore let me continue my defence, if you wish to report the case to the Pope, and to judge me fairly. Once more I tell you that I have been a sojourner in this marvellous city Rome for nigh on twenty years, and here I have exercised my art in matters of vast importance. Knowing that this is the seat of Christ, I entertained the reasonable belief that when some temporal prince sought to inflict on me a mortal injury, I might have recourse to this holy chair and to this Vicar of Christ, in confidence that he would surely uphold my cause. Ah me! whither am I now to go? What prince is there who will protect me from this infamous assassination? Was it not your business, before you took me up, to find out what I had done with those eighty thousand ducats? Was it not your duty to inspect the record of the jewels, which have been carefully inscribed by this Apostolic Camera through the last five hundred years? If you had discovered anything missing on that record, then you ought to have seized all my books together with

[1] *Sollevati. It may mean half-risen from their seats.*

myself. I tell you for a certainty that the registers, on which are written all the jewels of the Pope and the regalia, must be perfectly in order; you will not find there missing a single article of value which belonged to Pope Clement that has not been minutely noted. The one thing of the kind which occurs to me is this: When that poor man Pope Clement wanted to make terms with those thieves of the Imperial army, who had robbed Rome and insulted the Church, a certain Cesare Iscatinaro, if I rightly remember his name, came to negotiate with him;[1] and having nearly concluded the agreement the Pope in his extremity, to show the man some mark of favour, let fall a diamond from his finger, which was worth about four thousand crowns, and when Iscatinaro stooped to pick it up, the Pope told him to keep it for his sake. I was present at these transactions: and if the diamond of which I speak be missing, I have told you where it went; but I have the firmest conviction that you will find even this noted upon the register. After this you may blush at your leisure for having done such cruel injustice to a man like me, who has performed so many honourable services for the apostolic chair. I would have you to know that, but for me, the morning when the Imperial troops entered the Borgo, they would without let or hindrance have forced their way into the castle. It was I who, unrewarded for this act, betook myself with vigour to the guns which had been aban-

[1] *Gio. Bartolommeo di Gattinara. Raffaello da Montelupo, in his Autobiography, calls him Cattinaro, and relates how "when he came one day into the castle to negotiate a treaty, he was wounded in the arm by one of our arquebusiers." This confirms what follows above.*

doned by the cannoneers and soldiers of the ordnance. I put spirit into my comrade Raffaello da Montelupo, the sculptor, who had also left his post and hid himself all frightened in a corner, without stirring foot or finger; I woke his courage up, and he and I alone together slew so many of the enemies that the soldiers took another road. I it was who shot at Iscatinaro when I saw him talking to Pope Clement without the slightest mark of reverence, nay, with the most revolting insolence, like the Lutheran and infidel he was. Pope Clement upon this had the castle searched to find and hang the man who did it. I it was who wounded the Prince of Orange in the head down there below the trenches of the castle. Then, too, how many ornaments of silver, gold, and jewels, how many models and coins, so beautiful and so esteemed, have I not made for Holy Church! Is this then the presumptuous priestly recompense you give a man who has served and loved you with such loyalty, with such mastery of art? Oh, go and report the whole that I have spoken to the Pope; go and tell him that his jewels are all in his possession; that I never received from the Church anything but wounds and stonings at that epoch of the sack; that I never reckoned upon any gain beyond some small remuneration from Pope Paolo, which he had promised me. Now at last I know what to think of his Holiness and you his Ministers."

While I was delivering this speech, they sat and listened in astonishment. Then exchanging glances one with the other, and making signs of much sur-

prise, they left me. All three went together to report what I had spoken to the Pope. The Pope felt some shame, and gave orders that all the records of the jewels should be diligently searched. When they had ascertained that none were missing, they left me in the castle without saying a word more about it. Signor Pier Luigi felt also that he had acted ill; and to end the affair, they set about to contrive my death.

CIV

During the agitations of this time which I have just related, King Francis received news of how the Pope was keeping me in prison, and with what injustice. He had sent a certain gentleman of his, named Monsignor di Morluc, as his ambassador to Rome;[1] to him therefore he now wrote, claiming me from the Pope as the man of his Majesty. The Pope was a person of extraordinary sense and ability, but in this affair of mine he behaved weakly and unintelligently; for he made answer to the King's envoy that his Majesty need pay me no attention, since I was a fellow who gave much trouble by fighting; therefore he advised his Majesty to leave me alone, adding that he kept me in prison for homicides and other devilries which I had played. To this the King sent answer that justice in his realm was excellently maintained; for even as his Majesty was wont to shower rewards and favours upon men of parts and

[1] *Jean de Montluc, brother of the celebrated Marshal, Bishop of Valence, a friend of Margaret of Navarre, and, like her, a protector of the Huguenots. He negotiated the election of the Duke of Anjou to the throne of Poland.*

virtue, so did he ever chastise the troublesome. His Holiness had let me go, not caring for the service of the said Benvenuto, and the King, when he saw him in his realm, most willingly adopted him; therefore he now asked for him in the quality of his own man. Such a demand was certainly one of the most honourable marks of favour which a man of my sort could desire; yet it proved the source of infinite annoyance and hurt to me. The Pope was roused to such fury by the jealous fear he had lest I should go and tell the whole world how infamously I had been treated, that he kept revolving ways in which I might be put to death without injury to his own credit.

The castellan of Sant' Angelo was one of our Florentines, called Messer Giorgio, a knight of the Ugolini family.[1] This worthy man showed me the greatest courtesy, and let me go free about the castle on parole. He was well aware how greatly I had been wronged; and when I wanted to give security for leave to walk about the castle, he replied that though he could not take that, seeing the Pope set too much importance upon my affair, yet he would frankly trust my word, because he was informed by every one what a worthy man I was. So I passed my parole, and he granted me conveniences for working at my trade. I then, reflecting that the Pope's anger against me must subside, as well because of my innocence as because of the favour shown me by the King, kept my shop in Rome open, while Ascanio, my prentice, came to the castle and brought me

[1] *It is only known of this man that he was a Knight of Jerusalem, and had been Commendatore of Prato in* 1511.

things to work at. I could not indeed do much, feeling myself imprisoned so unjustly; yet I made a virtue of necessity, and bore my adverse fortune with as light a heart as I was able.

I had secured the attachment of all the guards and many soldiers of the castle. Now the Pope used to come at times to sup there, and on those occasions no watch was kept, but the place stood open like an ordinary palace. Consequently, while the Pope was there, the prisoners used to be shut up with great precautions; none such, however, were taken with me, who had the license to go where I liked, even at those times, about its precincts. Often then those soldiers told me that I ought to escape, and that they would aid and abet me, knowing as they did how greatly I had been wronged. I answered that I had given my parole to the castellan, who was such a worthy man, and had done me such kind offices. One very brave and clever soldier used to say to me: "My Benvenuto, you must know that a prisoner is not obliged, and cannot be obliged, to keep faith, any more than aught else which befits a free man. Do what I tell you; escape from that rascal of a Pope and that bastard his son, for both are bent on having your life by villainy." I had, however, made my mind up rather to lose my life than to break the promise I had given that good man the castellan. So I bore the extreme discomforts of my situation, and had for companion of misery a friar of the Palavisina house, who was a very famous preacher.[1]

[1] *Cellini means Pallavicini. Nothing seems to be known about him, except that his imprisonment is mentioned in a letter of Caro's under date* 1540.

CV

This man had been arrested as a Lutheran. He was an excellent companion; but, from the point of view of his religion, I found him the biggest scoundrel in the world, to whom all kinds of vices were acceptable. His fine intellectual qualities won my admiration; but I hated his dirty vices, and frankly taxed him with them. This friar kept perpetually reminding me that I was in no wise bound to observe faith with the castellan, since I had become a prisoner. I replied to these arguments that he might be speaking the truth as a friar, but that as a man he spoke the contrary; for every one who called himself a man, and not a monk, was bound to keep his word under all circumstances in which he chanced to be. I therefore, being a man, and not a monk, was not going to break the simple and loyal word which I had given. Seeing then that he could not sap my honour by the subtle and ingenious sophistries he so eloquently developed, the friar hit upon another way of tempting me. He allowed some days to pass, during which he read me the sermons of Fra Jerolimo Savonarola; and these he expounded with such lucidity and learning that his comment was even finer than the text. I remained in ecstasies of admiration; and there was nothing in the world I would not have done for him, except, as I have said, to break my promised word. When he saw the effect his talents had produced upon my mind, he thought of yet another method. Cautiously he began to ask what means I should have taken, supposing my jailors had locked me up,

in order to set the dungeon doors open and effect my flight. I then, who wanted to display the sharpness of my own wits to so ingenious a man, replied that I was quite sure of being able to open the most baffling locks and bars, far more those of our prison, to do which would be the same to me as eating a bit of new cheese. In order then to gain my secret, the friar now made light of these assertions, averring that persons who have gained some credit by their abilities, are wont to talk big of things which, if they had to put their boasts in action, would speedily discredit them, and much to their dishonour. Himself had heard me speak so far from the truth, that he was inclined to think I should, when pushed to proof, end in a dishonourable failure. Upon this, feeling myself stung to the quick by that devil of a friar, I responded that I always made a practice of promising in words less than I could perform in deeds; what I had said about the keys was the merest trifle; in a few words I could make him understand that the matter was as I had told it; then, all too heedlessly, I demonstrated the facility with which my assertions could be carried into act. He affected to pay little attention; but all the same he learned my lesson well by heart with keen intelligence.

As I have said above, the worthy castellan let me roam at pleasure over the whole fortress. Not even at night did he lock me in, as was the custom with the other prisoners. Moreover, he allowed me to employ myself as I liked best, with gold or silver or with wax according to my whim. So then I laboured several weeks at the bason ordered by Cardinal

Ferrara, but the irksomeness of my imprisonment bred in me a disgust for such employment, and I took to modelling in wax some little figures of my fancy, for mere recreation. Of the wax which I used, the friar stole a piece; and with this he proceeded to get false keys made, upon the method I had heedlessly revealed to him. He had chosen for his accomplice a registrar named Luigi, a Paduan, who was in the castellan's service. When the keys were ordered, the locksmith revealed their plot; and the castellan, who came at times to see me in my chamber, noticing the wax which I was using, recognised it at once and exclaimed: "It is true that this poor fellow Benvenuto has suffered a most grievous wrong; yet he ought not to have dealt thus with me, for I have ever strained my sense of right to show him kindness. Now I shall keep him straitly under lock and key, and shall take good care to do him no more service." Accordingly, he had me shut up with disagreeable circumstances, among the worst of which were the words flung at me by some of his devoted servants, who were indeed extremely fond of me, but now, on this occasion, cast in my teeth all the kind offices the castellan had done me; they came, in fact, to calling me ungrateful, light, and disloyal. One of them in particular used those injurious terms more insolently than was decent; whereupon I, being convinced of my innocence, retorted hotly that I had never broken faith, and would maintain these words at the peril of my life, and that if he or any of his fellows abused me so unjustly, I would fling the lie back in his throat. The man,

intolerant of my rebuke, rushed to the castellan's room, and brought me the wax with the model of the keys. No sooner had I seen the wax than I told him that both he and I were in the right; but I begged him to procure for me an audience with the castellan, for I meant to explain frankly how the matter stood, which was of far more consequence than they imagined. The castellan sent for me at once, and I told him the whole course of events. This made him arrest the friar, who betrayed the registrar, and the latter ran a risk of being hanged. However, the castellan hushed the affair up, although it had reached the Pope's ears; he saved his registrar from the gallows, and gave me the same freedom as I had before.

CVI

When I saw how rigorously this affair was prosecuted, I began to think of my own concerns, and said: "Supposing another of these storms should rise, and the man should lose confidence in me, I should then be under no obligation to him, and might wish to use my wits a little, which would certainly work their end better than those of that rascally friar." So I began to have new sheets of a coarse fabric brought me, and did not send the dirty ones away. When my servants asked for them, I bade them hold their tongues, saying I had given the sheets to some of those poor soldiers; and if the matter came to knowledge, the wretched fellows ran risk of the galleys. This made my young men and attendants, especially Felice, keep the secret of the sheets in all loyalty. I meanwhile set myself to emp-

tying a straw mattress, the stuffing of which I burned, having a chimney in my prison. Out of the sheets I cut strips, the third of a cubit in breadth; and when I had made enough in my opinion to clear the great height of the central keep of Sant' Agnolo, I told my servants that I had given away what I wanted; they must now bring me others of a finer fabric, and I would always send back the dirty ones. This affair was presently forgotten.

Now my work-people and serving-men were obliged to close my shop at the order of the Cardinals Santi Quattro[1] and Cornaro, who told me openly that the Pope would not hear of setting me at large, and that the great favours shown me by King Francis had done far more harm than good. It seems that the last words spoken from the King by Monsignor di Morluc had been to this effect, namely, that the Pope ought to hand me over to the ordinary judges of the court; if I had done wrong, he could chastise me; but otherwise, it was but reason that he should set me at liberty. This message so irritated the Pope that he made his mind up to keep me a prisoner for life. At the same time, the castellan most certainly did his utmost to assist me.

When my enemies perceived that my shop was closed, they lost no opportunity of taunting and reviling those servants and friends of mine who came to visit me in prison. It happened on one occasion that Ascanio, who came twice a day to visit me, asked to have a jacket cut out for him from a blue silk vest of mine I never used. I had only worn it

[1] *Antonio Pucci, a Florentine, Cardinal de' Quattro Santi Coronati.*

once, on the occasion when I walked in procession. I replied that these were not the times nor was I in the place to wear such clothes. The young man took my refusal of this miserable vest so ill that he told me he wanted to go home to Tagliacozzo. All in a rage, I answered that he could not please me better than by taking himself off; and he swore with passion that he would never show his face to me again. When these words passed between us, we were walking round the keep of the castle. It happened that the castellan was also taking the air there; so just when we met his lordship Ascanio said: "I am going away; farewell forever!" I added: "Forever, is my wish too; and thus in sooth shall it be. I shall tell the sentinels not to let you pass again!" Then, turning to the castellan, I begged him with all my heart to order the guards to keep Ascanio out, adding: "This little peasant comes here to add to my great trouble; I entreat you, therefore, my lord, not to let him enter any more." The castellan was much grieved, because he knew him to be a lad of marvellous talents; he was, moreover, so fair of person that every one who once set eyes on him seemed bound to love him beyond measure.

The boy went away weeping. That day he had with him a small scimitar, which it was at times his wont to carry hidden beneath his clothes. Leaving the castle then, and having his face wet with tears, he chanced to meet two of my chief enemies, Jeronimo the Perugian,[1] and a certain Michele, goldsmiths both of them. Michele, being Jeronimo's

[1] *i.e., Girolamo Pascucci.*

friend and Ascanio's enemy, called out: "What is Ascanio crying for? Perhaps his father is dead; I mean that father in the castle!" Ascanio answered on the instant: "He is alive, but you shall die this minute." Then, raising his hand, he struck two blows with the scimitar, both at the fellow's head; the first felled him to earth, the second lopped three fingers off his right hand, though it was aimed at his head. He lay there like a dead man. The matter was at once reported to the Pope, who cried in a great fury: "Since the King wants him to be tried, go and give him three days to prepare his defence!" So they came, and executed the commission which the Pope had given them.

The excellent castellan went off upon the spot to his Holiness, and informed him that I was no accomplice in the matter, and that I had sent Ascanio about his business. So ably did he plead my cause that he saved my life from this impending tempest. Ascanio meanwhile escaped to Tagliacozzo, to his home there, whence he wrote begging a thousand times my pardon, and acknowledging his wrong in adding troubles to my grave disaster; but protesting that if through God's grace I came out from the prison, he meant never to abandon me. I let him understand that he must mind his art, and that if God set me at large again I would certainly recall him.

CVII

The castellan was subject to a certain sickness, which came upon him every year and deprived him of his wits. The sign of its approach was that he kept con-

tinually talking, or rather jabbering, to no purpose. These humours took a different shape each year; one time he thought he was an oil-jar; another time he thought he was a frog, and hopped about as frogs do; another time he thought he was dead, and then they had to bury him; not a year passed but he got some such hypochondriac notions into his head. At this season he imagined that he was a bat, and when he went abroad to take the air, he used to scream like bats in a high thin tone; and then he would flap his hands and body as though he were about to fly. The doctors, when they saw the fit was coming on him, and his old servants, gave him all the distractions they could think of; and since they had noticed that he derived much pleasure from my conversation, they were always fetching me to keep him company. At times the poor man detained me for four or five stricken hours without ever letting me cease talking. He used to keep me at his table, eating opposite to him, and never stopped chatting and making me chat; but during those discourses I contrived to make a good meal. He, poor man, could neither eat nor sleep; so that at last he wore me out. I was at the end of my strength; and sometimes when I looked at him, I noticed that his eyeballs were rolling in a frightful manner, one looking one way and the other in another.

He took it into his head to ask me whether I had ever had a fancy to fly. I answered that it had always been my ambition to do those things which offer the greatest difficulties to men, and that I had done them; as to flying, the God of Nature had gifted me with

a body well suited for running and leaping far beyond the common average, and that with the talents I possessed for manual art I felt sure I had the courage to try flying. He then inquired what methods I should use; to which I answered that, taking into consideration all flying creatures, and wishing to imitate by art what they derived from nature, none was so apt a model as the bat. No sooner had the poor man heard the name bat, which recalled the humour he was suffering under, than he cried out at the top of his voice: "He says true—he says true; the bat's the thing—the bat's the thing!" Then he turned to me and said: "Benvenuto, if one gave you the opportunity, should you have the heart to fly?" I said that if he would set me at liberty, I felt quite up to flying down to Prati, after making myself a pair of wings out of waxed linen. Thereupon he replied: "I too should be prepared to take flight; but since the Pope has bidden me guard you as though you were his own eyes, and I know you a clever devil who would certainly escape, I shall now have you locked up with a hundred keys in order to prevent you slipping through my fingers." I then began to implore him, and remind him that I might have fled, but that on account of the word which I had given him I would never have betrayed his trust: therefore I begged him for the love of God, and by the kindness he had always shown me, not to add greater evils to the misery of my present situation. While I was pouring out these entreaties, he gave strict orders to have me bound and taken and locked up in prison. On seeing that it could not be helped,

I told him before all his servants: "Lock me well up, and keep good watch on me; for I shall certainly contrive to escape." So they took and confined me with the utmost care.

CVIII

I then began to deliberate upon the best way of making my escape. No sooner had I been locked in, than I went about exploring my prison; and when I thought I had discovered how to get out of it, I pondered the means of descending from the lofty keep, for so the great round central tower is called. I took those new sheets of mine, which, as I have said already, I had cut in strips and sewn together; then I reckoned up the quantity which would be sufficient for my purpose. Having made this estimate and put all things in order, I looked out a pair of pincers which I had abstracted from a Savoyard belonging to the guard of the castle. This man superintended the casks and cisterns; he also amused himself with carpentering. Now he possessed several pairs of pincers, among which was one both big and heavy. I then, thinking it would suit my purpose, took it and hid it in my straw mattress. The time had now come for me to use it; so I began to try the nails which kept the hinges of my door in place.[1] The door was double, and the clinching of the nails could not be seen; so that when I attempted to draw one out, I met with the greatest trouble; in the end, however, I succeeded. When I had drawn the first

[1] *The door seems to have been hung upon hinges with plates nailed into the posts. Cellini calls these plates bandelle.*

nail, I bethought me how to prevent its being noticed. For this purpose I mixed some rust, which I had scraped from old iron, with a little wax, obtaining exactly the same colour as the heads of the long nails which I had extracted. Then I set myself to counterfeit these heads and place them on the holdfasts; for each nail I extracted I made a counterfeit in wax. I left the hinges attached to their door-posts at top and bottom by means of some of the same nails that I had drawn; but I took care to cut these and replace them lightly, so that they only just supported the irons of the hinges.

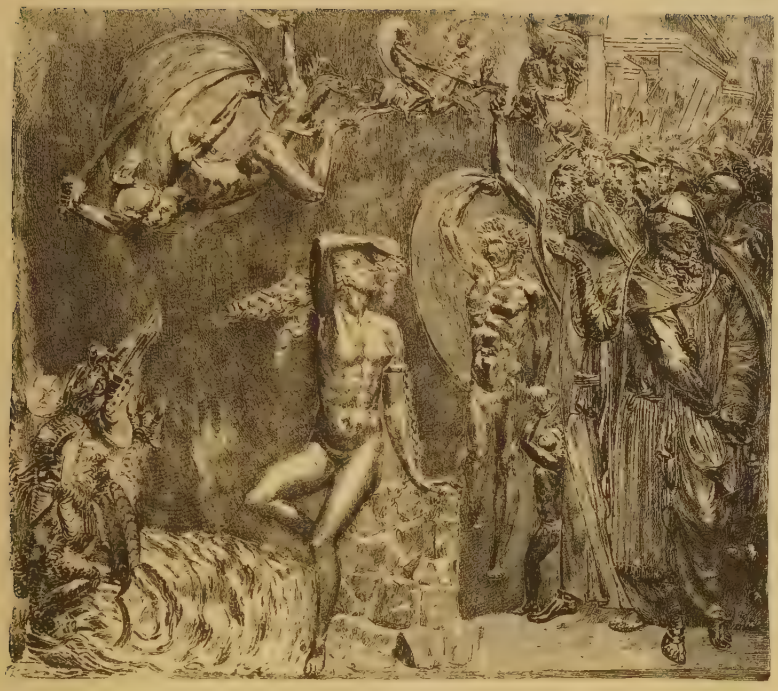
All this I performed with the greatest difficulty, because the castellan kept dreaming every night that I had escaped, which made him send from time to time to inspect my prison. The man who came had the title and behaviour of a catchpole. He was called Bozza, and used always to bring with him another of the same sort, named Giovanni and nicknamed Pedignone; the latter was a soldier, and Bozza a serving-man. Giovanni never entered my prison without saying something offensive to me. He came from the district of Prato, and had been an apothecary in the town there. Every evening he minutely examined the holdfasts of the hinges and the whole chamber, and I used to say: "Keep a good watch over me, for I am resolved by all means to escape." These words bred a great enmity between him and me, so that I was obliged to use precautions to conceal my tools, that is to say, my pincers and a great big poniard and other appurtenances. All these I put away together in my mattress, where

I also kept the strips of linen I had made. When day broke, I used immediately to sweep my room out; and though I am by nature a lover of cleanliness, at that time I kept myself unusually spick and span. After sweeping up, I made my bed as daintily as I could, laying flowers upon it, which a Savoyard used to bring me nearly every morning. He had the care of the cistern and the casks, and also amused himself with carpentering; it was from him I stole the pincers which I used in order to draw out the nails from the holdfasts of the hinges.

CIX

Well, to return to the subject of my bed; when Bozza and Pedignone came, I always told them to give it a wide berth, so as not to dirty and spoil it for me. Now and then, just to irritate me, they would touch it lightly, upon which I cried: "Ah, dirty cowards! I'll lay my hand on one of your swords there, and will do you a mischief that will make you wonder. Do you think you are fit to touch the bed of a man like me? When I chastise you I shall not heed my own life, for I am certain to take yours. Let me alone then with my troubles and my tribulations, and don't give me more annoyance than I have already; if not, I shall make you see what a desperate man is able to do." These words they reported to the castellan, who gave them express orders never to go near my bed, and when they came to me, to come without swords, but for the rest to keep a watchful guard upon me.

Having thus secured my bed from meddlers, I felt



BAS-RELIEF OF THE PERSEUS
(FLORENCE)

as though the main point was gained; for there lay all things needful to my venture. It happened on the evening of a certain feast-day that the castellan was seriously indisposed; his humours grew extravagant; he kept repeating that he was a bat, and if they heard that Benvenuto had flown away, they must let him go to catch me up, since he could fly by night most certainly as well or better than myself; for it was thus he argued: "Benvenuto is a counterfeit bat, but I am a real one; and since he is committed to my care, leave me to act; I shall be sure to catch him." He had passed several nights in this frenzy, and had worn out all his servants, whereof I received full information through divers channels, but specially from the Savoyard, who was my friend at heart.

On the evening of that feast-day, then, I made my mind up to escape, come what might; and first I prayed most devoutly to God, imploring His Divine Majesty to protect and succour me in that so perilous a venture. Afterwards I set to work at all the things I needed, and laboured the whole of the night. It was two hours before daybreak when at last I removed those hinges with the greatest toil; but the wooden panel itself and the bolt too offered such resistance that I could not open the door; so I had to cut into the wood; yet in the end I got it open, and shouldering the strips of linen which I had rolled up like bundles of flax upon two sticks, I went forth and directed my steps toward the latrines of the keep. Spying from within two tiles upon the roof, I was able at once to clamber up with ease. I wore a

white doublet with a pair of white hose and a pair of half boots, into which I had stuck the poniard I have mentioned.

After scaling the roof, I took one end of my linen roll and attached it to a piece of antique tile which was built into the fortress wall; it happened to jut out scarcely four fingers. In order to fix the band, I gave it the form of a stirrup. When I had attached it to that piece of tile, I turned to God and said: "Lord God, give aid to my good cause; you know that it is good; you see that I am aiding myself." Then I let myself go gently by degrees, supporting myself with the sinews of my arms, until I touched the ground. There was no moonshine, but the light of a fair open heaven. When I stood upon my feet on solid earth, I looked up at the vast height which I had descended with such spirit, and went gladly away, thinking I was free. But this was not the case; for the castellan on that side of the fortress had built two lofty walls, the space between which he used for stable and henyard; the place was barred with thick iron bolts outside. I was terribly disgusted to find there was no exit from this trap; but while I paced up and down debating what to do, I stumbled on a long pole which was covered up with straw. Not without great trouble I succeeded in placing it against the wall, and then swarmed up it by the force of my arms until I reached the top. But since the wall ended in a sharp ridge, I had not strength enough to drag the pole up after me. Accordingly I made my mind up to use a portion of the second roll of linen which I had there; the other was left hanging

from the keep of the castle. So I cut a piece off, tied it to the pole, and clambered down the wall, enduring the utmost toil and fatigue. I was quite exhausted, and had, moreover, flayed the inside of my hands, which bled freely. This compelled me to rest awhile, and I bathed my hands in my own urine. When I thought that my strength was recovered, I advanced quickly toward the last rampart, which faces toward Prati. There I put my bundle of linen lines down upon the ground, meaning to fasten them round a battlement, and descend the lesser as I had the greater height. But no sooner had I placed the linen, than I became aware behind me of a sentinel, who was going the rounds. Seeing my designs interrupted and my life in peril, I resolved to face the guard. This fellow, when he noticed my bold front, and that I was marching on him with weapon in hand, quickened his pace and gave me a wide berth. I had left my lines some little way behind; so I turned with hasty steps to regain them; and though I came within sight of another sentinel, he seemed as though he did not choose to take notice of me. Having found my lines and attached them to the battlement, I let myself go. On the descent, whether it was that I thought I had really come to earth and relaxed my grasp to jump, or whether my hands were so tired that they could not keep their hold, at any rate I fell, struck my head in falling, and lay stunned for more than an hour and a half, so far as I could judge.

It was just upon daybreak, when the fresh breeze which blows an hour before the sun revived me;

yet I did not immediately recover my senses, for I thought my head had been cut off and fancied that I was in purgatory. With time, little by little, my faculties returned, and I perceived that I was outside the castle, and in a flash remembered all my adventures. I was aware of the wound in my head before I knew my leg was broken; for I put my hands up, and withdrew them covered with blood. Then I searched the spot well, and judged and ascertained that I had sustained no injury of consequence there; but when I wanted to stand up, I discovered that my right leg was broken three inches above the heel. Not even this dismayed me: I drew forth my poniard with its scabbard; the latter had a metal point ending in a large ball, which had caused the fracture of my leg; for the bone, coming into violent contact with the ball, and not being able to bend, had snapped at that point. I threw the sheath away, and with the poniard cut a piece of the linen which I had left. Then I bound my leg up as well as I could, and crawled on all fours with the poniard in my hand toward the city gate. When I reached it, I found it shut; but I noticed a stone just beneath the door which did not appear to be very firmly fixed. This I attempted to dislodge; after setting my hands to it, and feeling it move, it easily gave way, and I drew it out. Through the gap thus made I crept into the town.

CX

I had crawled more than five hundred paces from the place where I fell, to the gate by which I entered.

No sooner had I got inside than some mastiff dogs set upon me and bit me badly. When they returned to the attack and worried me, I drew my poniard and wounded one of them so sharply that he howled aloud, and all the dogs, according to their nature, ran after him. I meanwhile made the best way I could on all fours toward the church of the Trespontina.

On arriving at the opening of the street which leads to Sant' Agnolo, I turned off in the direction of San Piero; and now the dawn had risen over me, and I felt myself in danger. When therefore I chanced to meet a water-carrier driving his donkey laden with full buckets, I called the fellow, and begged him to carry me upon his back to the terrace by the steps of San Piero, adding: "I am an unfortunate young man, who, while escaping from a window in a love-adventure, have fallen and broken my leg. The place from which I made my exit is one of great importance; and if I am discovered, I run risk of being cut to pieces; so for heaven's sake lift me quickly, and I will give you a crown of gold." Saying this, I clapped my hand to my purse, where I had a good quantity. He took me up at once, hitched me on his back, and carried me to the raised terrace by the steps to San Piero. There I bade him leave me, saying he must run back to his donkey.

I resumed my march, crawling always on all fours, and making for the palace of the Duchess, wife of Duke Ottavio and daughter of the Emperor.[1] She

[1] *Margaret of Austria, who married Ottaviano Farnese in November 1538, after Alessandro's murder.*

was his natural child, and had been married to Duke Alessandro. I chose her house for refuge, because I was quite certain that many of my friends, who had come with that great princess from Florence, were tarrying there; also because she had taken me into favour through something which the castellan had said in my behalf. Wishing to be of service to me, he told the Pope that I had saved the city more than a thousand crowns of damage, caused by heavy rain on the occasion when the Duchess made her entrance into Rome. He related how he was in despair, and how I put heart into him, and went on to describe how I had pointed several large pieces of artillery in the direction where the clouds were thickest, and whence a deluge of water was already pouring; then, when I began to fire, the rain stopped, and at the fourth discharge the sun shone out; and so I was the sole cause of the festival succeeding, to the joy of everybody. On hearing this narration the Duchess said: "That Benvenuto is one of the artists of merit, who enjoyed the good-will of my late husband, Duke Alessandro, and I shall always hold them in mind if an opportunity comes of doing such men service." She also talked of me to Duke Ottavio. For these reasons I meant to go straight to the house of her Excellency, which was a very fine palace situated in Borgio Vecchio.

I should have been quite safe from recapture by the Pope if I could have stayed there; but my exploits up to this point had been too marvellous for a human being, and God was unwilling to encourage my vainglory; accordingly, for my own good, He

chastised me a second time worse even than the first. The cause of this was that while I was crawling on all fours up those steps, a servant of Cardinal Cornaro recognised me. His master was then lodging in the palace; so the servant ran up to his room and woke him, crying: "Most reverend Monsignor, your friend Benvenuto is down there; he has escaped from the castle, and is crawling on all fours, streaming with blood; to all appearances he has broken a leg, and we don't know whither he is going." The Cardinal exclaimed at once: "Run and carry him upon your back into my room here." When I arrived, he told me to be under no apprehension, and sent for the first physicians of Rome to take my case in hand. Among them was Maestro Jacomo of Perugia, a most excellent and able surgeon. He set the bone with dexterity, then bound the limb up, and bled me with his own hand. It happened that my veins were swollen far beyond their usual size, and he too wished to make a pretty wide incision; accordingly the blood sprang forth so copiously, and spurted with such force into his face, that he had to abandon the operation. He regarded this as a very bad omen, and could hardly be prevailed upon to undertake my cure. Indeed, he often expressed a wish to leave me, remembering that he ran no little risk of punishment for having treated my case, or rather for having proceeded to the end with it. The Cardinal had me placed in a secret chamber, and went off immediately to beg me from the Pope.

CXI

During this while all Rome was in an uproar; for they had observed the bands of linen fastened to the great keep of the castle, and folk were running in crowds to behold so extraordinary a thing. The castellan had gone off into one of his worst fits of frenzy; in spite of all his servants, he insisted upon taking his flight also from the tower, saying that no one could recapture me except himself if he were to fly after me. Messer Ruberto Pucci, the father of Messer Pandolfo,[1] having heard of the great event, went in person to inspect the place; afterwards he came to the palace, where he met with Cardinal Cornaro, who told him exactly what had happened, and how I was lodged in one of his own chambers, and already in the doctor's hands. These two worthy men went together, and threw themselves upon their knees before the Pope; but he, before they could get a word out, cried aloud: "I know all that you want of me." Messer Ruberto Pucci then began: "Most blessed Father, we beg you for Heaven's grace to give us up that unfortunate man; surely his great talents entitle him to exceptional treatment; moreover, he has displayed such audacity, blent with so much ingenuity, that his exploit might seem superhuman. We know not for what crimes your Holiness has kept him so long in prison; however, if those crimes are too exorbitant, your Holiness is wise and holy, and may your will be done unquestioned; still, if they are such as can

[1] *See Vol. I., p. 232.*

be condoned, we entreat you to pardon him for our sake." The Pope, when he heard this, felt shame, and answered: "I have kept him in prison at the request of some of my people, since he is a little too violent in his behaviour; but recognising his talents, and wishing to keep him near our person, we had intended to treat him so well that he should have no reason to return to France. I am very sorry to hear of his bad accident; tell him to mind his health, and when he is recovered, we will make it up to him for all his troubles."

Those two excellent men returned and told me the good news they were bringing from the Pope. Meanwhile the nobility of Rome, young, old, and all sorts, came to visit me. The castellan, out of his mind as he was, had himself carried to the Pope; and when he was in the presence of his Holiness, began to cry out, and to say that if he did not send me back to prison, he would do him a great wrong. "He escaped under parole which he gave me; woe is me that he has flown away when he promised not to fly!" The Pope said, laughing: "Go, go; for I will give him back to you without fail." The castellan then added, speaking to the Pope: "Send the Governor to him to find out who helped him to escape; for if it is one of my men, I will hang him from the battlement whence Benvenuto leaped." On his departure the Pope called the Governor, and said, smiling: "That is a brave fellow, and his exploit is something marvellous; all the same, when I was a young man, I also descended from the fortress at that very spot." In so saying the Pope spoke the truth: for he had been imprisoned in the castle for forging

a brief at the time when he was abbreviator *di Parco Majoris*.[1] Pope Alexander kept him confined for some length of time; and afterwards, his offence being of too ugly a nature, had resolved on cutting off his head. He postponed the execution, however, till after Corpus Domini; and Farnese, getting wind of the Pope's will, summoned Pietro Chiavelluzzi with a lot of horses, and managed to corrupt some of the castle guards with money. Accordingly, upon the day of Corpus Domini, while the Pope was going in procession, Farnese got into a basket and was let down by a rope to the ground. At that time the outer walls had not been built around the castle; only the great central tower existed; so that he had not the same enormous difficulty that I met with in escaping; moreover, he had been imprisoned justly, and I against all equity. What he wanted was to brag before the Governor of having in his youth been spirited and brave; and it did not occur to him that he was calling attention to his own huge rogueries. He said then: "Go and tell him to reveal his accomplice without apprehension to you, be the man who he may be, since I have pardoned him; and this you may assure him without reservation."

CXII

So the Governor came to see me. Two days before he had been made Bishop of Jesi;[2] and when he

[1] *The Collegium Abbreviatorum di Parco Majori consisted of seventy-two members. It was established by Pius II. Onofrio Panvinio tells this story of Paul III.'s imprisonment and escape, but places it in the Papacy of Innocent VIII. See Vita Pauli III., in continuation of Platina.*

[2] *Cellini confuses Jesi with Forlimpopoli. See above, p. 6, note.*

entered he said: "Friend Benvenuto, although my office is wont to frighten men, I come to set your mind at rest, and to do this I have full authority from his Holiness's own lips, who told me how he also escaped from Sant' Angelo, but had many aids and much company, else he would not have been able to accomplish it. I swear by the sacraments which I carry on my person (for I was consecrated Bishop two days since) that the Pope has set you free and pardoned you, and is very sorry for your accident. Attend to your health, and take all things for the best; for your imprisonment, which you certainly underwent without a shadow of guilt, will have been for your perpetual welfare. Henceforward you will tread down poverty, and will not have to go back to France, wearing out your life in this place and in that. Tell me then frankly how the matter went, and who rendered you assistance; afterwards take comfort, repose, and recover." I began at the beginning, and related the whole story exactly as it had happened, giving him the most minute countersigns, down to the water-carrier who bore me on his back. When the Governor had heard the whole, he said: "Of a surety these are too great exploits for one man alone; no one but you could have performed them." So he made me reach my hand forth, and said: "Be of good courage and comfort your heart, for by this hand which I am holding you are free, and if you live, shall live in happiness." While thus conversing with me, he had kept a whole heap of great lords and noblemen waiting, who were come to visit me, saying one to the other: "Let us go to

see this man who works miracles." So, when he departed, they stayed by me, and one made me offers of kindness, and another made me presents.

While I was being entertained in this way, the Governor returned to the Pope, and reported all that I had said. As chance would have it, Signor Pier Luigi, the Pope's son, happened to be present, and all the company gave signs of great astonishment. His Holiness remarked: "Of a truth this is a marvellous exploit." Then Pier Luigi began to speak as follows: "Most blessed Father, if you set that man free, he will do something still more marvellous, because he has by far too bold a spirit. I will tell you another story about him which you do not know. That Benvenuto of yours, before he was imprisoned, came to words with a gentleman of Cardinal Santa Fiore,[1] about some trifle which the latter had said to him. Now Benvenuto's retort was so swaggeringly insolent that it amounted to throwing down a cartel. The gentleman referred the matter to the Cardinal, who said that if he once laid hands on Benvenuto he would soon clear his head of such folly. When the fellow heard this, he got a little fowling-piece of his ready, with which he is accustomed to hit a penny in the middle; accordingly, one day when the Cardinal was looking out of window, Benvenuto's shop being under the palace of the Cardinal, he took his gun and pointed it upon the Cardinal. The Cardinal, however, had been warned, and presently withdrew. Benvenuto, in order that his intention might escape

[1] *Ascanio Sforza, son of Bosio, Count of Santa Fiore, and grandson of Paul III. He got the hat in* 1534, *at the age of sixteen.*

notice, aimed at a pigeon which was brooding high up in a hole of the palace, and hit it exactly in the head—a feat one would have thought incredible. Now let your Holiness do what you think best about him; I have discharged my duty by saying what I have. It might even come into his head, imagining that he had been wrongly imprisoned, to fire upon your Holiness. Indeed he is too truculent, by far too confident in his own powers. When he killed Pompeo, he gave him two stabs with a poniard in the throat, in the midst of ten men who were guarding him; then he escaped, to their great shame, and yet they were no inconsiderable persons."

CXIII

While these words were being spoken, the gentleman of Santa Fiore with whom I had that quarrel was present, and confirmed to the Pope what had been spoken by his son. The Pope swelled with rage, but said nothing. I shall now proceed to give my own version of the affair, truly and honestly.

This gentleman came to me one day, and showed me a little gold ring which had been discoloured by quicksilver, saying at the same time: "Polish up this ring for me, and be quick about it." I was engaged at the moment upon jewel-work of gold and gems of great importance: besides, I did not care to be ordered about so haughtily by a man I had never seen or spoken to; so I replied that I did not happen to have by me the proper tool for cleaning up his ring,[1]

[1] *Cellini calls it isvivatoio. It is properly avvivatoio, a sort of brass rod with a wooden handle.*

and that he had better go to another goldsmith. Without further provocation he retorted that I was a donkey; whereupon I said that he was not speaking the truth; that I was a better man than he in every respect, but that if he kept on irritating me I would give him harder kicks than any donkey could. He related the matter to the Cardinal, and painted me as black as the devil in hell. Two days afterwards I shot a wild pigeon in a cleft high up behind the palace. The bird was brooding in that cleft, and I had often seen a goldsmith named Giovan Francesco della Tacca, from Milan, fire at it; but he never hit it. On the day when I shot it, the pigeon scarcely showed its head, being suspicious because it had been so often fired at. Now this Giovan Francesco and I were rivals in shooting wildfowl; and some gentlemen of my acquaintance, who happened to be at my shop, called my attention, saying: "Up there is Giovan Francesco della Tacca's pigeon, at which he has so often fired; look now, the poor creature is so frightened that it hardly ventures to put its head out." I raised my eyes, and said: "That morsel of its head is quite enough for me to shoot it by, if it only stays till I can point my gun." The gentlemen protested that even the man who invented firearms could not hit it. I replied: "I bet a bottle of that excellent Greek wine Palombo the host keeps, that if it keeps quiet long enough for me to point my good Broccardo (so I used to call my gun), I will hit it in that portion of its head which it is showing." So I aimed my gun, elevating my arms, and using no other rest, and did what I had pro-

mised, without thinking of the Cardinal or any other person; on the contrary, I held the Cardinal for my very good patron. Let the world, then, take notice, when Fortune has the will to ruin a man, how many divers ways she takes! The Pope, swelling with rage and grumbling, remained revolving what his son had told him.

CXIV

Two days afterwards the Cardinal Cornaro went to beg a bishopric from the Pope for a gentleman of his called Messer Andrea Centano. The Pope, in truth, had promised him a bishopric; and this being now vacant, the Cardinal reminded him of his word. The Pope acknowledged his obligation, but said that he too wanted a favour from his most reverend lordship, which was that he would give up Benvenuto to him. On this the Cardinal replied: "Oh, if your Holiness has pardoned him and set him free at my disposal, what will the world say of you and me?" The Pope answered: "I want Benvenuto, you want the bishopric; let the world say what it chooses." The good Cardinal entreated his Holiness to give him the bishopric, and for the rest to think the matter over, and then to act according as his Holiness decided. The Pope, feeling a certain amount of shame at so wickedly breaking his word, took what seemed a middle course: "I will send for Benvenuto, and in order to gratify the whim I have, will put him in those rooms which open on my private garden; there he can attend to his recovery, and I will not prevent any of his friends from coming to visit him. More-

over, I will defray his expenses until this caprice of mine has left me."

The Cardinal came home, and sent the candidate for this bishopric on the spot to inform me that the Pope was resolved to have me back, but that he meant to keep me in a ground-floor room in his private garden, where I could receive the visits of my friends, as I had done in his own house. I implored this Messer Andrea to ask the Cardinal not to give me up to the Pope, but to let me act on my own account. I would have myself wrapped up in a mattress, and carried to a safe place outside Rome; for if he gave me up to the Pope, he would certainly be sending me to death. It is believed that when the Cardinal heard my petition he was not ill-disposed to grant it; but Messer Andrea, wanting to secure the bishopric, denounced me to the Pope, who sent at once and had me lodged in the ground-floor chamber of his private garden. The Cardinal sent me word not to eat the food provided for me by the Pope; he would supply me with provisions; meanwhile I was to keep my spirits up, for he would work in my cause till I was set free. Matters being thus arranged, I received daily visits and generous offers from many great lords and gentlemen. Food came from the Pope, which I refused to touch, only eating that which came from Cardinal Cornaro; and thus I remained awhile.

I had among my friends a young Greek of the age of twenty-five years. He was extremely active in all physical exercises, and the best swordsman in Rome; rather poor-spirited, however, but loyal

LOGGIA DE' LANZI
(FLORENCE)

to the backbone; honest, and ready to believe what people told him. He had heard it said that the Pope made known his intention of compensating me for all I had gone through. It is true that the Pope began by saying so, but he ended by saying quite the opposite. I then determined to confide in the young Greek, and said to him: "Dearest brother, they are plotting my ruin; so now the time has come to help me. Do they imagine, when they heap those extraordinary favours on me, that I am not aware they are done to betray me?" The worthy young man answered: "My Benvenuto, they say in Rome that the Pope has bestowed on you an office with an income of five hundred crowns; I beseech you therefore not to let those suspicions deprive you of so great a windfall." All the same I begged him with clasped hands to aid me in escaping from that place, saying I knew well that a Pope of that sort, though he could do me much good if he chose, was really studying secretly, and to save appearances, how he might best destroy me; therefore we must be quick and try to save me from his clutches. If my friend would get me out of that place by the means I meant to tell him, I should always regard him as the saviour of my life, and when occasion came would lay it down for him with gladness. The poor young man shed tears, and cried: "Oh, my dear brother, though you are bringing destruction on your head, I cannot but fulfil your wishes; so explain your plan, and I will do whatever you may order, albeit much against my will." Accordingly we came to an agreement, and I disclosed to him the details of my

scheme, which was certain to have succeeded without difficulty. When I hoped that he was coming to execute it, he came and told me that for my own good he meant to disobey me, being convinced of the truth of what he had heard from men close to the Pope's person, who understood the real state of my affairs. Having nothing else to rely upon, I remained in despair and misery. This passed on the day of Corpus Domini 1539.

CXV

After my conversation with the Greek, the whole day wore away, and at night there came abundant provisions from the kitchen of the Pope; the Cardinal Cornaro also sent good store of viands from his kitchen; and some friends of mine being present when they arrived, I made them stay to supper, and enjoyed their society, keeping my leg in splints beneath the bed-clothes. An hour after nightfall they left me; and two of my servants, having made me comfortable for the night, went to sleep in the antechamber. I had a dog, black as a mulberry, one of those hairy ones, who followed me admirably when I went out shooting, and never left my side. During the night he lay beneath my bed, and I had to call out at least three times to my servant to turn him out, because he howled so fearfully. When the servants entered, the dog flew at them and tried to bite them. They were frightened, and thought he must be mad, because he went on howling. In this way we passed the first four hours of the night. At the stroke of four the Bargello came into my room

with a band of constables. Then the dog sprang forth and flew at them with such fury, tearing their capes and hose, that in their fright they fancied he was mad. But the Bargello, like an experienced person, told them: "It is the nature of good dogs to divine and foretell the mischance coming on their masters. Two of you take sticks and beat the dog off; while the others strap Benvenuto on this chair; then carry him to the place you wot of." It was, as I have said, the night after Corpus Domini, and about four o'clock.

The officers carried me, well shut up and covered, and four of them went in front, making the few passengers who were still abroad get out of the way. So they bore me to Torre di Nona, such is the name of the place, and put me in the condemned cell. I was left upon a wretched mattress under the care of a guard, who kept all night mourning over my bad luck, and saying to me: "Alas! poor Benvenuto, what have you done to those great folk?" I could now form a very good opinion of what was going to happen to me, partly by the place in which I found myself, and also by what the man had told me.[1] During a portion of that night I kept racking my brains what the cause could be why God thought fit to try me so, and not being able to discover it, I was violently agitated in my soul. The guard did the best he could to comfort me; but I begged him for the love of God to stop talking, seeing I should be better able to compose myself alone in quiet. He pro-

[1] *Cellini thought he was going to have his throat cut. And indeed the Torre di Nona was a suspicious place, it being one of the worst criminal prisons in Rome.*

mised to do as I asked; and then I turned my whole heart to God, devoutly entreating Him to deign to take me into His kingdom. I had, it is true, murmured against my lot, because it seemed to me that, so far as human laws go, my departure from the world in this way would be too unjust; it is true also that I had committed homicides, but His Vicar had called me from my native city and pardoned me by the authority he had from Him and from the laws; and what I had done had all been done in defence of the body which His Majesty had lent me; so I could not admit that I deserved death according to the dispensation under which man dwells here; but it seemed that what was happening to me was the same as what happens to unlucky people in the street, when a stone falls from some great height upon their head and kills them; this we see clearly to be the influence of the stars; not indeed that the stars conspire to do us good or evil, but the effect results from their conjunctions, to which we are subordinated. At the same time I know that I am possessed of free-will, and if I could exert the faith of a saint, I am sure that the angels of heaven would bear me from this dungeon and relieve me of all my afflictions; yet inasmuch as God has not deemed me worthy of such miracles, I conclude that those celestial influences must be wreaking their malignity upon me. In this long struggle of the soul I spent some time; then I found comfort, and fell presently asleep.

CXVI

When the day dawned, the guard woke me up and said: "Oh, unfortunate but worthy man, you have no more time to go on sleeping, for one is waiting here to give you evil news." I answered: "The sooner I escape from this earthly prison, the happier shall I be; especially as I am sure my soul is saved, and that I am going to an undeserved death. Christ, the glorious and divine, elects me to the company of His disciples and friends, who, like Himself, were condemned to die unjustly. I too am sentenced to an unjust death, and I thank God with humility for this sign of grace. Why does not the man come forward who has to pronounce my doom?" The guard replied: "He is too grieved for you, and sheds tears." Then I called him by his name of Messer Benedetto da Cagli,[1] and cried: "Come forward, Messer Benedetto, my friend, for now, I am resolved and in good frame of mind; far greater glory is it for me to die unjustly than if I had deserved this fate. Come forward, I beg, and let me have a priest, in order that I may speak a couple of words with him. I do not indeed stand in need of this, for I have already made my heart's confession to my Lord God; yet I should like to observe the ordinances of our Holy Mother Church; for though she has done me this abominable wrong, I pardon her with all my soul. So come, friend Messer Benedetto, and despatch my business before I lose control over my better instincts."

[1] *It will be remembered that Benedetto da Cagli was one of Cellini's three examiners during his first imprisonment in S. Angelo.*

After I had uttered these words, the worthy man told the guard to lock the door, because nothing could be done without his presence. He then repaired to the house of Signor Pier Luigi's wife, who happened to be in company with the Duchess of whom I spoke above.[1] Presenting himself before them both, he spoke as follows: "My most illustrious mistress, I entreat you for the love of God to tell the Pope that he must send some one else to pronounce sentence upon Benvenuto and perform my office; I renounce the task, and am quite decided not to carry it through." Then, sighing, he departed with the strongest signs of inward sorrow. The Duchess, who was present, frowned and said: "So this is the fine justice dealt out here in Rome by God's Vicar! The Duke, my late husband, particularly esteemed this man for his good qualities and eminent abilities; he was unwilling to let him return to Rome, and would gladly have kept him close to his own person." Upon this she retired, muttering words of indignation and displeasure. Signor Pier Luigi's wife, who was called Signora Jerolima, betook herself to the Pope, and threw herself upon her knees before him in the presence of several cardinals. She pleaded my cause so warmly that she woke the Pope to shame; whereupon he said: "For your sake we will leave him quiet; yet you must know that we had no ill-will against him." These words he spoke because of the cardinals who were around him, and had listened to the eloquence of that brave-spirited lady.

[1] *The wife of Pier Luigi Farnese was Jeronima, daughter of Luigi Orsini, Count of Pitigliano.*

Meanwhile I abode in extreme discomfort, and my heart kept thumping against my ribs. Not less was the discomfort of the men appointed to discharge the evil business of my execution; but when the hour for dinner was already past, they betook themselves to their several affairs, and my meal was also served me. This filled me with a glad astonishment, and I exclaimed: "For once truth has been stronger than the malice of the stars! I pray God, therefore, that, if it be His pleasure, He will save me from this fearful peril." Then I fell to eating with the same stout heart for my salvation as I had previously prepared for my perdition. I dined well, and afterwards remained without seeing or hearing any one until an hour after nightfall. At that time the Bargello arrived with a large part of his guard, and had me replaced in the chair which brought me on the previous evening to the prison. He spoke very kindly to me, bidding me be under no apprehension; and bade his constables take good care not to strike against my broken leg, but to treat me as though I were the apple of their eye. The men obeyed, and brought me to the castle whence I had escaped; then, when we had mounted to the keep, they left me shut up in a dungeon opening upon a little court there is there.

CXVII

The castellan, meanwhile, ill and afflicted as he was, had himself transported to my prison, and exclaimed: "You see that I have recaptured you!" "Yes," said I, "but you see that I escaped, as I told you I would.

And if I had not been sold by a Venetian Cardinal, under Papal guarantee, for the price of a bishopric, the Pope a Roman and a Farnese (and both of them have scratched with impious hands the face of the most sacred laws), you would not have recovered me. But now that they have opened this vile way of dealing, do you the worst you can in your turn; I care for nothing in the world." The wretched man began shouting at the top of his voice: "Ah, woe is me! woe is me! It is all the same to this fellow whether he lives or dies, and behold, he is more fiery than when he was in health. Put him down there below the garden, and do not speak to me of him again, for he is the destined cause of my death."

So I was taken into a gloomy dungeon below the level of a garden, which swam with water, and was full of big spiders and many venomous worms. They flung me a wretched mattress of coarse hemp, gave me no supper, and locked four doors upon me. In that condition I abode until the nineteenth hour of the following day. Then I received food, and I requested my jailors to give me some of my books to read. None of them spoke a word, but they referred my prayer to the unfortunate castellan, who had made inquiries concerning what I said. Next morning they brought me an Italian Bible which belonged to me, and a copy of the Chronicles of Giovanni Villani.[1] When I asked for certain other of my books, I was told that I could have no more, and that I had got too many already.

[1] *This mention of an Italian Bible shows that we are still in the days before the Council of Trent.*

Thus, then, I continued to exist in misery upon that rotten mattress, which in three days soaked up water like a sponge. I could hardly stir because of my broken leg; and when I had to get out of bed to obey a call of nature, I crawled on all fours with extreme distress, in order not to foul the place I slept in. For one hour and a half each day I got a little glimmering of light, which penetrated that unhappy cavern through a very narrow aperture. Only for so short a space of time could I read; the rest of the day and night I abode in darkness, enduring my lot, nor ever without meditations upon God and on our human frailty. I thought it certain that a few more days would put an end to my unlucky life in that sad place and in that miserable manner. Nevertheless, as well as I was able, I comforted my soul by calling to mind how much more painful it would have been, on passing from this life, to have suffered that unimaginable horror of the hangman's knife. Now, being as I was, I should depart with the anodyne of sleepiness, which robbed death of half its former terrors. Little by little I felt my vital forces waning, until at last my vigorous temperament had become adapted to that purgatory. When I felt it quite acclimatised, I resolved to put up with all those indescribable discomforts so long as it held out.

CXVIII

I began the Bible from the commencement, reading and reflecting on it so devoutly, and finding in it such deep treasures of delight, that, if I had been able, I should have done naught else but study it.

However, light was wanting; and the thought of all my troubles kept recurring and gnawing at me in the darkness, until I often made my mind up to put an end somehow to my own life. They did not allow me a knife, however, and so it was no easy matter to commit suicide. Once, notwithstanding, I took and propped a wooden pole I found there, in position like a trap. I meant to make it topple over on my head, and it would certainly have dashed my brains out; but when I had arranged the whole machine, and was approaching to put it in motion, just at the moment of my setting my hand to it, I was seized by an invisible power and flung four cubits from the spot, in such a terror that I lay half dead. Like that I remained from dawn until the nineteenth hour, when they brought my food. The jailors must have visited my cell several times without my taking notice of them; for when at last I heard them, Captain Sandrino Monaldi[1] had entered, and I heard him saying: "Ah, unhappy man! behold the end to which so rare a genius has come!" Roused by these words, I opened my eyes, and caught sight of priests with long gowns on their backs, who were saying: "Oh, you told us he was dead!" Bozza replied: "Dead I found him, and therefore I told you so." Then they lifted me from where I lay, and after shaking up the mattress, which was now as soppy as a dish of maccaroni, they flung it outside the dungeon. The castellan, when these things were reported to him, sent me another mattress. Thereafter, when I searched my memory to find what could have di-

[1] *A Florentine, banished in 1530 for having been in arms against the Medici.*

verted me from that design of suicide, I came to the conclusion that it must have been some power divine and my good guardian angel.

CXIX

During the following night there appeared to me in dreams a marvellous being in the form of a most lovely youth, who cried, as though he wanted to reprove me: "Knowest thou who lent thee that body, which thou wouldst have spoiled before its time?" I seemed to answer that I recognised all things pertaining to me as gifts from the God of nature. "So, then," he said, "thou hast contempt for His handiwork, through this thy will to spoil it? Commit thyself unto His guidance, and lose not hope in His great goodness!" Much more he added, in words of marvellous efficacy, the thousandth part of which I cannot now remember.

I began to consider that the angel of my vision spoke the truth. So I cast my eyes around the prison, and saw some scraps of rotten brick, with the fragments of which, rubbing one against the other, I composed a paste. Then, creeping on all fours, as I was compelled to go, I crawled up to an angle of my dungeon door, and gnawed a splinter from it with my teeth. Having achieved this feat, I waited till the light came on my prison; that was from the hour of twenty and a half to twenty-one and a half. When it arrived, I began to write, the best I could, on some blank pages in my Bible, and rebuked the regents of my intellectual self for being too impatient to endure this life; they replied to my body

with excuses drawn from all that they had suffered; and the body gave them hope of better fortune. To this effect, then, by way of dialogue, I wrote as follows:

Benvenuto in the body.

Afflicted regents of my soul!
Ah, cruel ye! have ye such hate of life?

The Spirits of his soul.

If Heaven against you roll,
Who stands for us? who saves us in the strife?
Let us, O let us go toward better life!

Benvenuto.

Nay, go not yet awhile!
Ye shall be happier and lighter far—
Heaven gives this hope—than ye were ever yet!

The Spirits.

We will remain some little while,
If only by great God you promised are
Such grace that no worse woes on us be set.

After this I recovered strength; and when I had heartened up myself, I continued reading in the Bible, and my eyes became so used to that darkness that I could now read for three hours instead of the bare hour and a half I was able to employ before.

With profound astonishment I dwelt upon the force of God's Spirit in those men of great simplicity, who believed so fervently that He would bring all their heart's desire to pass. I then proceeded to reckon in my own case too on God's assistance, both because of His divine power and mercy, and also be-

cause of my own innocence; and at all hours, sometimes in prayer and sometimes in communion with God, I abode in those high thoughts of Him. There flowed into my soul so powerful a delight from these reflections upon God, that I took no further thought for all the anguish I had suffered, but rather spent the day in singing psalms and divers other compositions on the theme of His divinity.

I was greatly troubled, however, by one particular annoyance: my nails had grown so long that I could not touch my body without wounding it; I could not dress myself but what they turned inside or out, to my great torment. Moreover, my teeth began to perish in my mouth. I became aware of this because the dead teeth being pushed out by the living ones, my gums were gradually perforated, and the points of the roots pierced through the tops of their cases. When I was aware of this, I used to pull one out, as though it were a weapon from a scabbard, without any pain or loss of blood. Very many of them did I lose in this way. Nevertheless, I accommodated myself to these new troubles also; at times I sang, at times I prayed, and at times I wrote by means of the paste of brick-dust I have described above. At this time I began composing a Capitolo in praise of my prison, relating in it all the accidents which had befallen me.[1] This poem I mean to insert in its proper place.

[1] *Capitolo is the technical name for a copy of verses in terza rima on a chosen theme. Poems of this kind, mostly burlesque or satirical, were very popular in Cellini's age. They used to be written on trifling or obscene subjects in a mock-heroic style. Berni stamped the character of high art upon the species, which had long been in use among the unlettered vulgar. See for further particulars Symonds' Renaissance in Italy, vol. v. chap. xiv.*

CXX

The good castellan used frequently to send messengers to find out secretly what I was doing. So it happened on the last day of July that I was rejoicing greatly by myself alone while I bethought me of the festival they keep in Rome upon the 1st of August; and I was saying to myself: "In former years I kept the feast among the pleasures and the frailties of the world; this year I shall keep it in communion with God. Oh, how far more happy am I thus than I was then!" The persons who heard me speak these words reported them to the castellan. He was greatly annoyed, and exclaimed: "Ah, God! that fellow lives and triumphs in his infinite distress, while I lack all things in the midst of comfort, and am dying only on account of him! Go quickly, and fling him into that deepest of the subterranean dungeons where the preacher Foiano was starved to death.[1] Perhaps when he finds himself in such ill plight he will begin to droop his crest."

Captain Sandrino Monaldi came at once into my prison with about twenty of the castellan's servants. They found me on my knees; and I did not turn at their approach, but went on paying my orisons before a God the Father, surrounded with angels, and a Christ arising victorious from the grave, which I had sketched upon the wall with a little piece of

[1] *Fra Benedetto da Foiano had incurred the wrath of Pope Clement VII. by preaching against the Medici in Florence. He was sent to Rome and imprisoned in a noisome dungeon of S. Angelo in the year 1530, where Clement made him perish miserably by diminishing his food and water daily till he died. See Varchi's Storia Fiorentina, lib. xii. chap. 4.*

charcoal I had found covered up with earth. This was after I had lain four months upon my back in bed with my leg broken, and had so often dreamed that angels came and ministered to me, that at the end of those four months the limb became as sound as though it never had been fractured. So then these fellows entered, all in armour, as fearful of me as though I were a poison-breathing dragon. The captain spoke as follows: "You must be aware that there are many of us here, and our entrance has made a tumult in this place, yet you do not turn round." When I heard these words, I was well able to conceive what greater harm might happen to me; but being used and hardened to misfortune, I said to them: "Unto this God who supports me, to Him in heaven I have turned my soul, my contemplation, and all my vital spirits; to you I have turned precisely what belongs to you. What there is of good in me, you are not worthy to behold, nor can you touch it. Do then to that which is under your control all the evil you are able." The captain, in some alarm, and not knowing what I might be on the point of doing, said to four of his tallest fellows: "Put all your arms aside." When they had done so, he added: "Now upon the instant leap on him, and secure him well. Do you think he is the devil, that so many of us should be afraid of him? Hold him tight now, that he may not escape you." Seized by them with force and roughly handled, and anticipating something far worse than what afterwards happened, I lifted my eyes to Christ and said: "Oh, just God, Thou paidest all our debts upon that high-raised cross of Thine; wherefore then must my

innocence be made to pay the debts of whom I do not even know? Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Meanwhile the men were carrying me away with a great lighted torch; and I thought that they were about to throw me down the oubliette of Sammabo. This was the name given to a fearful place which had swallowed many men alive; for when they are cast into it, they fall to the bottom of a deep pit in the foundations of the castle. This did not, however, happen to me; wherefore I thought that I had made a very good bargain when they placed me in that hideous dungeon I have spoken of, where Fra Foiano died of hunger, and left me there without doing me further injury.

When I was alone, I began to sing a *De profundis clamavi*, a *Miserere*, and *In te Domine speravi*. During the whole of that first day of August I kept festival with God, my heart rejoicing ever in the strength of hope and faith. On the second day they drew me from that hole, and took me back again to the prison where I had drawn those representations of God. On arriving there, the sight of them filled me with such sweetness and such gladness that I wept abundantly. On every day that followed, the castellan sent to know what I was doing and saying. The Pope, who had heard the whole history (and I must add that the doctors had already given the castellan over), spoke as follows: "Before my castellan dies I will let him put that Benvenuto to death in any way he likes, for he is the cause of his death, and so the good man shall not die unrevenged." On hearing these words from the mouth of Duke Pier Luigi, the castellan replied: "So, then, the Pope has given

LUCA MARTINI
/BRONZINO

me Benvenuto, and wishes me to take my vengeance on him? Dismiss the matter from your mind, and leave me to act." If the heart of the Pope was ill-disposed against me, that of the castellan was now at the commencement savage and cruel in the extreme. At this juncture the invisible being who had diverted me from my intention of suicide, came to me, being still invisible, but with a clear voice, and shook me, and made me rise, and said to me: "Ah me! my Benvenuto, quick, quick, betake thyself to God with thy accustomed prayers, and cry out loudly, loudly!" In a sudden consternation I fell upon my knees, and recited several of my prayers in a loud voice; after this I said *Qui habitat in adjutorio;* then I communed a space with God; and in an instant the same clear and open voice said to me: "Go to rest, and have no further fear!" The meaning of this was, that the castellan, after giving the most cruel orders for my death, suddenly countermanded them, and said: "Is not this Benvenuto the man whom I have so warmly defended, whom I know of a surety to be innocent, and who has been so greatly wronged? Oh, how will God have mercy on me and my sins if I do not pardon those who have done me the greatest injuries? Oh, why should I injure a man both worthy and innocent, who has only done me services and honour? Go to! instead of killing him, I give him life and liberty: and in my will I'll have it written that none shall demand of him the heavy debt for his expenses here which he would elsewise have to pay." This the Pope heard, and took it very ill indeed.

CXXI

I meanwhile continued to pray as usual, and to write my Capitolo, and every night I was visited with the gladdest and most pleasant dreams that could be possibly imagined. It seemed to me while dreaming that I was always in the visible company of that being whose voice and touch, while he was still invisible, I had so often felt. To him I made but one request, and this I urged most earnestly, namely, that he would bring me where I could behold the sun. I told him that this was the sole desire I had, and that if I could but see the sun once only, I should die contented. All the disagreeable circumstances of my prison had become, as it were, to me friendly and companionable; not one of them gave me annoyance. Nevertheless, I ought to say that the castellan's parasites, who were waiting for him to hang me from the battlement whence I had made my escape, when they saw that he had changed his mind to the exact opposite of what he previously threatened, were unable to endure the disappointment. Accordingly, they kept continually trying to inspire me with the fear of imminent death by means of various terrifying hints. But, as I have already said, I had become so well acquainted with troubles of this sort that I was incapable of fear, and nothing any longer could disturb me; only I had that one great longing to behold the sphere of the sun, if only in a dream.

Thus then, while I spent many hours a day in prayer with deep emotion of the spirit toward Christ, I used always to say: "Ah, very Son of God! I pray

Thee by Thy birth, by Thy death upon the cross, and by Thy glorious resurrection, that Thou wilt deign to let me see the sun, if not otherwise, at least in dreams. But if Thou wilt grant me to behold it with these mortal eyes of mine, I engage myself to come and visit Thee at Thy holy sepulchre." This vow and these my greatest prayers to God I made upon the 2nd of October in the year 1539. Upon the following morning, which was the 3rd of October, I woke at daybreak, perhaps an hour before the rising of the sun. Dragging myself from the miserable lair in which I lay, I put some clothes on, for it had begun to be cold; then I prayed more devoutly than ever I had done in the past, fervently imploring Christ that He would at least grant me the favour of knowing by divine inspiration what sin I was so sorely expiating; and since His Divine Majesty had not deemed me worthy of beholding the sun even in a dream, I besought Him to let me know the cause of my punishment.

CXXII

I had barely uttered these words, when that invisible being, like a whirlwind, caught me up and bore me away into a large room, where he made himself visible to my eyes in human form, appearing like a young man whose beard is just growing, with a face of indescribable beauty, but austere, not wanton. He bade me look around the room, and said: "The crowd of men thou seest in this place are all those who up to this day have been born and afterwards have died upon the earth." Thereupon I asked him

why he brought me hither, and he answered: "Come with me and thou shalt soon behold." In my hand I had a poniard, and upon my back a coat of mail; and so he led me through that vast hall, pointing out the people who were walking by innumerable thousands up and down, this way and that. He led me onward, and went forth in front of me through a little low door into a place which looked like a narrow street; and when he drew me after him into the street, at the moment of leaving the hall, behold I was disarmed and clothed in a white shirt, with nothing on my head, and I was walking on the right hand of my companion. Finding myself in this condition, I was seized with wonder, because I did not recognise the street; and when I lifted my eyes, I discerned that the splendour of the sun was striking on a wall, as it were a house-front, just above my head. Then I said: "Oh, my friend! what must I do in order to be able to ascend so high that I may gaze upon the sphere of the sun himself?" He pointed out some huge stairs which were on my right hand, and said to me: "Go up thither by thyself." Quitting his side, I ascended the stairs backwards, and gradually began to come within the region of the sunlight. Then I hastened my steps, and went on, always walking backwards as I have described, until I discovered the whole sphere of the sun. The strength of his rays, as is their wont, first made me close my eyes; but becoming aware of my misdoing, I opened them wide, and gazing steadfastly at the sun, exclaimed: "Oh, my sun, for whom I have so passionately yearned! Albeit your rays may blind me, I do

not wish to look on anything again but this!" So I stayed awhile with my eyes fixed steadily on him; and after a brief space I beheld in one moment the whole might of those great burning rays fling themselves upon the left side of the sun; so that the orb remained quite clear without its rays, and I was able to contemplate it with vast delight. It seemed to me something marvellous that the rays should be removed in that manner. Then I reflected what divine grace it was which God had granted me that morning, and cried aloud: "Oh, wonderful Thy power! oh, glorious Thy virtue! How far greater is the grace which Thou art granting me than that which I expected!" The sun without his rays appeared to me to be a bath of the purest molten gold, neither more nor less. While I stood contemplating this wondrous thing, I noticed that the middle of the sphere began to swell, and the swollen surface grew, and suddenly a Christ upon the cross formed itself out of the same substance as the sun. He bore the aspect of divine benignity, with such fair grace that the mind of man could not conceive the thousandth part of it; and while I gazed in ecstasy, I shouted: "A miracle! a miracle! O God! O clemency Divine! O immeasurable Goodness! what is it Thou hast deigned this day to show me!" While I was gazing and exclaiming thus, the Christ moved toward that part where his rays were settled, and the middle of the sun once more bulged out as it had done before; the boss expanded, and suddenly transformed itself into the shape of a most beautiful Madonna, who appeared to be sitting enthroned on high, holding

her child in her arms with an attitude of the greatest charm and a smile upon her face. On each side of her was an angel, whose beauty far surpasses man's imagination. I also saw within the rondure of the sun, upon the right hand, a figure robed like a priest; this turned its back to me, and kept its face directed to the Madonna and the Christ. All these things I beheld, actual, clear, and vivid, and kept returning thanks to the glory of God as loud as I was able. The marvellous apparition remained before me little more than half a quarter of an hour; then it dissolved, and I was carried back to my dark lair.

I began at once to shout aloud: "The virtue of God hath deigned to show me all His glory, the which perchance no mortal eye hath ever seen before. Therefore I know surely that I am free and fortunate and in the grace of God; but you miscreants shall be miscreants still, accursed, and in the wrath of God. Mark this, for I am certain of it, that on the day of All Saints, the day upon which I was born in 1500, on the first of November, at four hours after nightfall, on that day which is coming you will be forced to lead me from this gloomy dungeon; less than this you will not be able to do, because I have seen it with these eyes of mine and in that throne of God. The priest who kept his face turned to God and his back to me, that priest was S. Peter, pleading my cause, for the shame he felt that such foul wrongs should be done to Christians in his own house. You may go and tell it to whom you like; for none on earth has the power to do me harm henceforward; and tell that lord who keeps me here, that if he will

give me wax or paper and the means of portraying this glory of God which was revealed to me, most assuredly shall I convince him of that which now perhaps he holds in doubt."

CXXIII

The physicians gave the castellan no hope of his recovery, yet he remained with a clear intellect, and the humours which used to afflict him every year had passed away. He devoted himself entirely to the care of his soul, and his conscience seemed to smite him, because he felt that I had suffered and was suffering a grievous wrong. The Pope received information from him of the extraordinary things which I related; in answer to which his Holiness sent word—as one who had no faith either in God or aught beside—that I was mad, and that he must do his best to mend his health. When the castellan received this message, he sent to cheer me up, and furnished me with writing materials and wax, and certain little wooden instruments employed in working wax, adding many words of courtesy, which were reported by one of his servants who bore me good-will. This man was totally the opposite of that rascally gang who had wished to see me hanged. I took the paper and the wax, and began to work; and while I was working I wrote the following sonnet addressed to the castellan:

"*If I, my lord, could show to you the truth,*
Of that Eternal Light to me by Heaven
In this low life revealed, you sure had given
More heed to mine than to a monarch's sooth.

Ah! could the Pastor of Christ's flock in ruth
Believe how God this soul with sight hath shriven
Of glory unto which no wight hath striven
Ere he escaped earth's cave of care uncouth;

The gates of Justice, holy and austere,
Would roll asunder, and rude impious Rage
Fall chained with shrieks that should assail the skies.

Had I but light, ah me! my art should rear
A monument of Heaven's high equipage!
Nor should my misery bear so grim a guise."

CXXIV

On the following day, when the servant of the castellan who was my friend brought me my food, I gave him this sonnet copied out in writing. Without informing the other ill-disposed servants who were my enemies, he handed it to the castellan. At that time this worthy man would gladly have granted me my liberty, because he fancied that the great wrong done to me was a main cause of his death. He took the sonnet, and having read it more than once, exclaimed: "These are neither the words nor the thoughts of a madman, but rather of a sound and worthy fellow." Without delay he ordered his secretary to take it to the Pope, and place it in his own hands, adding a request for my deliverance.

While the secretary was on his way with my sonnet to the Pope, the castellan sent me lights for day and night, together with all the conveniences one could wish for in that place. The result of this was that I

began to recover from my physical depression, which had reached a very serious degree.

The Pope read the sonnet several times. Then he sent word to the castellan that he meant presently to do what would be pleasing to him. Certainly the Pope had no unwillingness to release me then; but Signor Pier Luigi, his son, as it were in the Pope's despite, kept me there by force.

The death of the castellan was drawing near; and while I was engaged in drawing and modelling that miracle which I had seen, upon the morning of All Saints' day he sent his nephew, Piero Ugolini, to show me certain jewels. No sooner had I set eyes on them than I exclaimed: "This is the countersign of my deliverance!" Then the young man, who was not a person of much intelligence, began to say: "Never think of that, Benvenuto!" I replied: "Take your gems away, for I am so treated here that I have no light to see by except what this murky cavern gives, and that is not enough to test the quality of precious stones. But, as regards my deliverance from this dungeon, the day will not end before you come to fetch me out. It shall and must be so, and you will not be able to prevent it." The man departed, and had me locked in; but after he had remained away two hours by the clock, he returned without armed men, bringing only a couple of lads to assist my movements; so after this fashion he conducted me to the spacious rooms which I had previously occupied (that is to say, in 1538), where I obtained all the conveniences I asked for.

CXXV

After the lapse of a few days, the castellan, who now believed that I was at large and free, succumbed to his disease and departed this life. In his room remained his brother, Messer Antonio Ugolini, who had informed the deceased governor that I was duly released. From what I learned, this Messer Antonio received commission from the Pope to let me occupy that commodious prison until he had decided what to do with me.

Messer Durante of Brescia, whom I have previously mentioned, engaged the soldier (formerly druggist of Prato) to administer some deadly liquor in my food;[1] the poison was to work slowly, producing its effect at the end of four or five months. They resolved on mixing pounded diamond with my victuals. Now the diamond is not a poison in any true sense of the word, but its incomparable hardness enables it, unlike ordinary stones, to retain very acute angles. When every other stone is pounded, that extreme sharpness of edge is lost; their fragments becoming blunt and rounded. The diamond alone preserves its trenchant qualities; wherefore, if it chances to enter the stomach together with food, the peristaltic motion[2] needful to digestion brings it into contact with the coats of the stomach and the bowels, where it sticks, and by the action of fresh food forcing it farther inwards, after some time per-

[1] *For Messer Durante, see Vol. I., p. 329. For the druggist of Prato employed as a warder in S. Angelo, see above, p. 25.*

[2] *In quel girare che e' fanno e' cibi. I have for the sake of clearness used the technical phrase above.*

forates the organs. This eventually causes death. Any other sort of stone or glass mingled with the food has not the power to attach itself, but passes onward with the victuals. Now Messer Durante entrusted a diamond of trifling value to one of the guards; and it is said that a certain Lione, a goldsmith of Arezzo, my great enemy, was commissioned to pound it.[1] The man happened to be very poor, and the diamond was worth perhaps some scores of crowns. He told the guard that the dust he gave him back was the diamond in question properly ground down. The morning when I took it, they mixed it with all I had to eat; it was a Friday, and I had it in salad, sauce, and pottage. That morning I ate heartily, for I had fasted on the previous evening; and this day was a festival. It is true that I felt the victuals scrunch beneath my teeth; but I was not thinking about knaveries of this sort. When I had finished, some scraps of salad remained upon my plate, and certain very fine and glittering splinters caught my eye among these remnants. I collected them, and took them to the window, which let a flood of light into the room; and while I was examining them, I remembered that the food I ate that morning had scrunched more than usual. On applying my senses strictly to the matter, the verdict of my eyesight was that they were certainly fragments of pounded diamond. Upon this I gave myself up without doubt as dead, and in my sorrow

[1] *The name of Leone Leoni is otherwise known as a goldsmith and bronze-caster. He made the tomb for Giangiacomo de' Medici, Il Medighino, in the Cathedral of Milan.*

had recourse with pious heart to holy prayers. I had resolved the question, and thought that I was doomed. For the space of a whole hour I prayed fervently to God, returning thanks to Him for so merciful a death. Since my stars had sentenced me to die, I thought it no bad bargain to escape from life so easily. I was resigned, and blessed the world and all the years which I had passed in it. Now I was returning to a better kingdom with the grace of God, the which I thought I had most certainly acquired.

While I stood revolving these thoughts in my mind, I held in my hand some flimsy particles of the reputed diamond, which of a truth I firmly believed to be such. Now hope is immortal in the human breast; therefore I felt myself, as it were, lured onward by a gleam of idle expectation. Accordingly, I took up a little knife and a few of those particles, and placed them on an iron bar of my prison. Then I brought the knife's point with a slow strong grinding pressure to bear upon the stone, and felt it crumble. Examining the substance with my eyes, I saw that it was so. In a moment new hope took possession of my soul, and I exclaimed: "Here I do not find my true foe, Messer Durante, but a piece of bad soft stone, which cannot do me any harm whatever!" Previously I had been resolved to remain quiet and to die in peace; now I revolved other plans; but first I rendered thanks to God and blessed poverty; for though poverty is oftentimes the cause of bringing men to death, on this occasion it had been the very cause of my salvation. I mean in this way: Messer Durante, my enemy, or whoever it was, gave a diamond to Lione

to pound for me of the worth of more than a hundred crowns; poverty induced him to keep this for himself, and to pound for me a greenish beryl of the value of two carlins, thinking perhaps, because it also was a stone, that it would work the same effect as the diamond.

CXXVI

At this time the Bishop of Pavia, brother of the Count of San Secondo, and commonly called Monsignor de' Rossi of Parma, happened to be imprisoned in the castle for some troublesome affairs at Pavia.[1] Knowing him to be my friend, I thrust my head out of the hole in my cell, and called him with a loud voice, crying that those thieves had given me a pounded diamond with the intention of killing me. I also sent some of the splinters which I had preserved, by the hand of one of his servants, for him to see. I did not disclose my discovery that the stone was not a diamond, but told him that they had most assuredly poisoned me, after the death of that most worthy man the castellan. During the short space of time I had to live, I begged him to allow me one loaf a day from his own stores, seeing that I had resolved to eat nothing which came from them. To this request he answered that he would supply me with victuals.

Messer Antonio, who was certainly not cognisant of the plot against my life, stirred up a great noise, and demanded to see the pounded stone, being also persuaded that it was a diamond; but on reflection

[1] *Gio. Girolamo de' Rossi, known in literature as a poet and historian of secondary importance.*

that the Pope was probably at the bottom of the affair, he passed it over lightly after giving his attention to the incident.

Henceforth I ate the victuals sent me by the Bishop, and continued writing my Capitolo on the prison, into which I inserted daily all the new events which happened to me, point by point. But Messer Antonio also sent me food; and he did this by the hand of that Giovanni of Prato, the druggist, then soldier in the castle, whom I have previously mentioned. He was a deadly foe of mine, and was the man who had administered the powdered diamond. So I told him that I would partake of nothing he brought me unless he tasted it before my eyes.[1] The man replied that Popes have their meat tasted. I answered: "Noblemen are bound to taste the meat for Popes; in like measure, you, soldier, druggist, peasant from Prato, are bound to taste the meat for a Florentine of my station." He retorted with coarse words, which I was not slow to pay back in kind.

Now Messer Antonio felt a certain shame for his behaviour; he had it also in his mind to make me pay the costs which the late castellan, poor man, remitted in my favour. So he hunted out another of his servants, who was my friend, and sent me food by this man's hands. The meat was tasted for me now with good grace, and no need for altercation. The servant in question told me that the Pope was being pestered every day by Monsignor di Morluc, who kept asking for my extradition on the part of the French King. The Pope, however, showed little

[1] *Me ne faceva la credenza.*

disposition to give me up; and Cardinal Farnese, formerly my friend and patron, had declared that I ought not to reckon on issuing from that prison for some length of time.[1] I replied that I should get out in spite of them all. The excellent young fellow besought me to keep quiet, and not to let such words of mine be heard, for they might do me some grave injury; having firm confidence in God, it was my duty to await His mercy, remaining in the meanwhile tranquil. I answered that the power and goodness of God are not bound to stand in awe before the malign forces of iniquity.

CXXVII

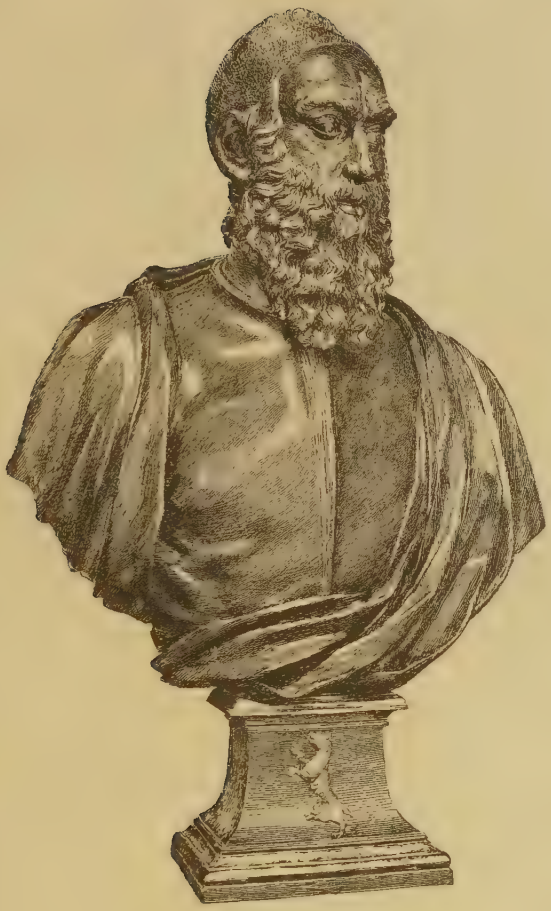
A few days had passed when the Cardinal of Ferrara arrived in Rome. He went to pay his respects to the Pope, and the Pope detained him up to supper-time. Now the Pope was a man of great talent for affairs, and he wanted to talk at his ease with the Cardinal about French politics. Everybody knows that folk, when they are feasting together, say things which they would otherwise retain. This therefore happened. The great King Francis was most frank and liberal in all his dealings, and the Cardinal was well acquainted with his temper. Therefore the latter could indulge the Pope beyond his boldest expectations. This raised his Holiness to a high pitch of merriment and gladness, all the more because he was accustomed to drink freely once a week, and went indeed to vomit after his indulgence. When, therefore, the Cardinal observed that the Pope was

[1] *This was the Cardinal Alessandro, son of Pier Luigi Farnese.*

well disposed, and ripe to grant favours, he begged for me at the King's demand, pressing the matter hotly, and proving that his Majesty had it much at heart. Upon this the Pope laughed aloud; he felt the moment for his vomit at hand; the excessive quantity of wine which he had drunk was also operating; so he said: "On the spot, this instant, you shall take him to your house." Then, having given express orders to this purpose, he rose from table. The Cardinal immediately sent for me, before Signor Pier Luigi could get wind of the affair; for it was certain that he would not have allowed me to be loosed from prison.

The Pope's mandatary came together with two great gentlemen of the Cardinal's, and when four o'clock of the night was passed, they removed me from my prison, and brought me into the presence of the Cardinal, who received me with indescribable kindness. I was well lodged, and left to enjoy the comforts of my situation.

Messer Antonio, the old castellan's brother, and his successor in the office, insisted on extracting from me the costs for food and other fees and perquisites claimed by sheriffs and such fry, paying no heed to his predecessor's will in my behalf. This affair cost me several scores of crowns; but I paid them, because the Cardinal told me to be well upon my guard if I wanted to preserve my life, adding that had he not extracted me that evening from the prison, I should never have got out. Indeed, he had already been informed that the Pope greatly regretted having let me go.



BUST OF BINDO ALTOVITI
(ROME)

CXXVIII

I am now obliged to take a step backwards, in order to resume the thread of some events which will be found in my Capitolo. While I was sojourning those few days in the chamber of the Cardinal, and afterwards in the Pope's private garden, there came among my other friends to visit me a cashier of Messer Bindo Altoviti, who was called Bernardo Galluzzi. I had entrusted to him a sum of several hundred crowns, and the young man sought me out in the Pope's garden, expressing his wish to give back this money to the uttermost farthing. I answered that I did not know where to place my property, either with a dearer friend or in a place that seemed to me more safe. He showed the strongest possible repugnance to keeping it, and I was, as it were, obliged to force him. Now that I had left the castle for the last time, I discovered that poor Bernardo Galluzzi was ruined, whereby I lost my money. Now while I was still imprisoned in that dungeon, I had a terrible dream, in which it seemed to me that words of the greatest consequence were written with a pen upon my forehead; the being who did this to me repeated at least three times that I should hold my tongue and not report the words to any one. When I awoke I felt that my forehead had been meddled with. In my Capitolo upon the prison I have related many incidents of this sort. Among others, it was told me (I not knowing what I then prophesied) how everything which afterwards happened to Signor Pier Luigi would take place, so

clearly and so circumstantially that I am under the persuasion it was an angel from heaven who informed me. I will not omit to relate another circumstance also, which is perhaps the most remarkable which has ever happened to any one. I do so in order to justify the divinity of God and of His secrets, who deigned to grant me that great favour; for ever since the time of my strange vision until now an aureole of glory (marvellous to relate) has rested on my head. This is visible to every sort of men to whom I have chosen to point it out; but those have been very few. This halo can be observed above my shadow in the morning from the rising of the sun for about two hours, and far better when the grass is drenched with dew. It is also visible at evening about sunset. I became aware of it in France at Paris; for the air in those parts is so much freer from mist, that one can see it there far better manifested than in Italy, mists being far more frequent among us. However, I am always able to see it and to show it to others, but not so well as in the country I have mentioned.

Now I will set forth the Capitolo I wrote in prison, and in praise of the said prison; after that I will follow the course of the good and evil things which have happened to me from time to time; and I mean also to relate what happens in the future.

THIS CAPITOLO I WRITE TO LUCA MARTINI, ADDRESSING HIM IN IT AS WILL APPEAR.[1]

Whoso would know the power of God's dominion,
And how a man resembles that high good,
Must lie in prison, is my firm opinion:

On grievous thoughts and cares of home must brood,
Oppressed with carking pains in flesh and bone,
Far from his native land full many a rood.

If you would fain by worthy deeds be known,
Seek to be prisoned without cause, lie long,
And find no friend to listen to your moan.

See that men rob you of your all by wrong;
Add perils to your life; be used with force,
Hopeless of help, by brutal foes and strong.

Be driven at length to some mad desperate course;
Burst from your dungeon, leap the castle wall;
Recaptured, find the prison ten times worse.

Now listen, Luca, to the best of all!
Your leg's been broken; you've been bought and sold;
Your dungeon's dripping; you've no cloak or shawl.

Never one friendly word; your victuals cold
Are brought with sorry news by some base groom
Of Prato—soldier now—druggist of old.

[1] *Cellini's Capitolo in Praise of the Prison is clearly made up of pieces written, as described above, in the dungeon of S. Angelo, and of passages which he afterwards composed to bring these pieces into a coherent whole. He has not displayed much literary skill in the redaction, and I have been at pains to preserve the roughness of the original.*

Mark well how Glory steeps her sons in gloom!
You have no seat to sit on, save the stool:
Yet were you active from your mother's womb.

The knave who serves hath orders strict and cool
To list no word you utter, give you naught,
Scarcely to ope the door; such is their rule.

These toys hath Glory for her nursling wrought!
No paper, pens, ink, fire, or tools of steel,
To exercise the quick brain's teeming thought.

Alack that I so little can reveal!
Fancy one hundred for each separate ill:
Full space and place I've left for prison weal!

But now my former purpose to fulfil,
And sing the dungeon's praise with honour due—
For this angelic tongues were scant of skill.

Here never languish honest men and true,
Except by placemen's fraud, misgovernment,
Jealousies, anger, or some spiteful crew.

To tell the truth whereon my mind is bent,
Here man knows God, nor ever stints to pray,
Feeling his soul with hell's fierce anguish rent.

Let one be famed as bad as mortal may,
Send him in jail two sorry years to pine,
He'll come forth holy, wise, beloved alway.

Here soul, flesh, clothes their substance gross refine;
Each bulky lout grows light like gossamere;
Celestial thrones before purged eyeballs shine.

I'll tell thee a great marvel! Friend, give ear!
The fancy took me on one day to write:
Learn now what shifts one may be put to here.

My cell I search, prick brows and hair upright,
Then turn me toward a cranny in the door,
And with my teeth a splinter disunite;

Next find a piece of brick upon the floor,
Crumble a part thereof to powder small,
And form a paste by sprinkling water o'er.[1]

Then, then came Poesy with fiery call
Into my carcass, by the way methought
Whence bread goes forth—there was none else at all.

Now to return unto my primal thought:
Who wills to know what weal awaits him, must
First learn the ill that God for him hath wrought.

The jail contains all arts in act and trust;
Should you but hanker after surgeon's skill,
'T will draw the spoiled blood from your veins adust.

Next there is something in itself that will
Make you right eloquent, a bold brave spark,
Big with high-soaring thoughts for good and ill.

Blessed is the man who lies in dungeon dark,
Languishing many a month, then takes his flight
Of war, truce, peace he knows, and tells the mark.

Needs be that all things turn to his delight;
The jail has crammed his brains so full of wit,
They 'll dance no morris to upset the wight.

[1] *The Italian is acqua morta; probably a slang phrase for urine.*

Perchance thou'lt urge: "Think how thy life did flit;
Nor is it true the jail can teach thee lore,
To fill thy breast and heart with strength of it!"

Nay, for myself I'll ever praise it more:
Yet would I like one law passed—that the man
Whose acts deserve it should not scape this score.

Whoso hath gotten the poor folk in ban,
I'd make him learn those lessons of the jail;
For then he'd know all a good ruler can:

He'd act like men who weigh by reason's scale,
Nor dare to swerve from truth and right aside,
Nor would confusion in the realm prevail.

While I was bound in prison to abide,
Foison of priests, friars, soldiers I could see;
But those who best deserved it least I spied.

Ah! could you know what rage came over me,
When for such rogues the jail relaxed her hold!
This makes one weep that one was born to be!

I'll add no more. Now I'm become fine gold,
Such gold as none flings lightly to the wind,
Fit for the best work eyes shall e'er behold.

Another point hath passed into my mind,
Which I've not told thee, Luca; where I wrote
Was in the book of one our kith and kind.[1]

There down the margins I was wont to note
Each torment grim that crushed me like a vice:
The paste my hurrying thoughts could hardly float.

[1] *Un nostro parente. He says above that he wrote the Capitolo on the leaves of his Bible.*

To make an O, I dipped the splinter thrice
In that thick mud; worse woe could scarcely grind
Spirits in hell debarred from Paradise.

Seeing I'm not the first by fraud confined,
This I'll omit; and once more seek the cell
Wherein I rack for rage both heart and mind.

I praise it more than other tongues will tell;
And, for advice to such as do not know,
Swear that without it none can labour well.

Yet oh! for one like Him I learned but now,
Who'd cry to me as by Bethesda's shore:
Take thy clothes, Benvenuto, rise and go!

Credo I'd sing, Salve reginas pour
And Paternosters; alms I'd then bestow
Morn after morn on blind folk, lame, and poor.

Ah me! how many a time my cheek must grow
Blanched by those lilies! Shall I then forswear
Florence and France through them for evermore?[1]

If to the hospital I come, and fair
Find the Annunziata limned, I'll fly:
Else shall I show myself a brute beast there.[2]

These words flout not Her worshipped sanctity,
Nor those Her lilies, glorious, holy, pure,
The which illumine earth and heaven high!

[1] *Here he begins to play upon the lilies, which were arms of the Farnesi, of Florence, and of France.*

[2] *Gabriel holds the lily in Italian paintings when he salutes the Virgin Mary with Ave Virgo!*

But for I find at every coign obscure
Base lilies which spread hooks where flowers should blow
Needs must I fear lest these to ruin lure.[1]

To think how many walk like me in woe!
Born what, how slaved to serve that hateful sign!
Souls lively, graceful, like to gods below!

I saw that lethal heraldry decline
From heaven like lightning among people vain;
Then on the stone I saw strange lustre shine.

The castle's bell must break ere I with strain
Thence issued; and these things Who speaketh true
In heaven on earth, to me made wondrous plain.[2]

Next I beheld a bier of sombre hue
Adorned with broken lilies; crosses, tears;
And on their beds a lost woe-stricken crew.[3]

I saw the Death who racks our souls with fears;
This man and that she menaced, while she cried:
"I clip the folk who harm thee with these shears!"

That worthy one then on my brow wrote wide
With Peter's pen words which—for he bade shun
To speak them thrice—within my breast I hide.[4]

Him I beheld who drives and checks the sun,
Clad with its splendour 'mid his court on high,
Seld-seen by mortal eyes, if e'er by one.[5]

[1] *That is, he finds everywhere in Italy the arms of the Farnesi.*
[2] *Allusion to his prevision of the castellan's death.*
[3] *Allusion to his prevision of Pier Luigi Farnese's murder.*
[4] *Allusion to the angel who visited him in prison.*
[5] *Allusion to his vision of the sun in the dungeon.*

Then did a solitary sparrow cry
Loud from the keep; hearing which note, I said:
"He tells that I shall live and you must die!"

I sang, and wrote my hard case, head by head,
Asking from God pardon and aid in need,
For now I felt mine eyes outworn and dead.

Ne'er lion, tiger, wolf, or bear knew greed
Hungrier than that man felt for human blood;
Nor viper with more venomous fang did feed.[1]

The cruel chief was he of robbers' brood,
Worst of the worst among a gang of knaves;
Hist! I'll speak soft lest I be understood!

Say, have ye seen catchpoles, the famished slaves,
In act a poor man's homestead to distrain,
Smashing down Christs, Madonnas, with their staves?

So on the first of August did that train
Dislodge me to a tomb more foul, more cold:—
"November damns and dooms each rogue to pain!"[2]

I at mine ears a trumpet had which told
Truth; and each word to them I did repeat,
Reckless, if but grief's load from me were rolled.

They, when they saw their final hope retreat,
Gave me a diamond, pounded, no fair ring,
Deeming that I must die if I should eat.

[1] *An invective against Pier Luigi Farnese.*

[2] *Allusion to the prophetic words he flung at the officers who took him to Foiano's dungeon.*

That villain churl whose office 't was to bring
My food, I bade taste first; but meanwhile thought:
"Not here I find my foe Durante's sting!"

Yet erst my mind unto high God I brought,
Beseeching Him to pardon all my sin,
And spoke a Miserere sorrow-fraught.

Then when I gained some respite from that din
Of troubles, and had given my soul to God,
Contented better realms and state to win,

I saw along the path which saints have trod,
From heaven descending, glad, with glorious palm,
An angel: clear he cried, "Upon earth's sod

Live longer thou! Through Him who heard thy psalm,
Those foes shall perish, each and all, in strife,
While thou remainest happy, free, and calm,
Blessed by our Sire in heaven on earth for life!"

BOOK SECOND

THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI

BOOK SECOND

I

REMAINED for some time in the Cardinal of Ferrara's palace, very well regarded in general by everybody, and much more visited even than I had previously been. Everybody was astonished that I should have come out of prison and have been able to live through such indescribable afflictions;[1] and while I was recovering my breath and endeavouring to resume the habit of my art, I had great pleasure in re-writing the Capitolo. Afterwards, with a view to re-establishing my strength, I determined to take a journey of a few days for a change of air. My good friend the Cardinal gave me permission and lent me horses; and I had two young Romans for my companions, one of them a craftsman in my trade, the other only a comrade in our journey. We left Rome, and took the road to Tagliacozzo, intending to visit my pupil Ascanio, who lived there. On our arrival, I found the lad, together with his father, brothers, sisters, and stepmother. I was entertained by them two days with indescribable kindness; then I turned my face towards Rome, taking Ascanio with me. On the road we fell to conversing about our art, which made me die of impatience to get back and recommence my labours.

[1] *This assertion is well supported by contemporary letters of Caro and Alamanni.*

Having reached Rome, I got myself at once in readiness to work, and was fortunate enough to find again a silver basin which I had begun for the Cardinal before I was imprisoned. Together with this basin I had begun a very beautiful little jug; but this had been stolen, with a great quantity of other valuable articles. I set Pagolo, whom I have previously mentioned, to work upon the basin. At the same time I recommenced the jug, which was designed with round figures and bas-reliefs. The basin was executed in a similar style, with round figures and fishes in bas-relief. The whole had such richness and good keeping, that every one who beheld it expressed astonishment at the force of the design and beauty of invention, and also at the delicacy[1] with which these young men worked.

The Cardinal came at least twice a day to see me, bringing with him Messer Luigi Alamanni and Messer Gabriel Cesano;[2] and here we used to pass an hour or two pleasantly together. Notwithstanding I had very much to do, he kept giving me fresh commissions. Among others, I had to make his pontifical seal, of the size of the hand of a boy of twelve. On it I engraved in intaglio two little histories, the one of San Giovanni preaching in the wilderness, the other of Sant' Ambrogio expelling the Arians[3] on horseback with a lash in his hand. The fire and correctness of design of this piece, and its nicety of workmanship, made every one say that I had sur-

[1] *Pulitezza. This indicates precision, neatness, cleanness of execution.*

[2] *The name of Cesano is well known in the literary correspondence of those times.*

[3] *It will be remembered that the Cardinal was Archbishop of Milan.*

passed the great Lautizio, who ranked alone in this branch of the profession. The Cardinal was so proud of it that he used to compare it complacently with the other seals of the Roman cardinals, which were nearly all from the hand of Lautizio.

II

In addition to these things the Cardinal ordered me to make the model for a salt-cellar; but he said he should like me to leave the beaten track pursued by such as fabricated these things. Messer Luigi, apropos of this salt-cellar, made an eloquent description of his own idea; Messer Gabriello Cesano also spoke exceedingly well to the same purpose. The Cardinal, who was a very kindly listener, showed extreme satisfaction with the designs which these two able men of letters had described in words. Then he turned to me and said: "My Benvenuto, the design of Messer Luigi and that of Messer Gabriello please me both so well that I know not how to choose between them; therefore I leave the choice to you, who will have to execute the work." I replied as follows: "It is apparent, my lords, of what vast consequence are the sons of kings and emperors, and what a marvellous brightness of divinity appears in them; nevertheless, if you ask some poor humble shepherd which he loves best, those royal children or his sons, he will certainly tell you that he loves his own sons best. Now I too have a great affection for the children which I bring forth from my art; consequently the first which I will show you, most reverend monsignor my good master, shall be of my own mak-

ing and invention. There are many things beautiful enough in words which do not match together well when executed by an artist." Then I turned to the two scholars and said: "You have spoken, I will do." Upon this Messer Luigi Alamanni smiled, and added a great many witty things, with the greatest charm of manner, in my praise; they became him well, for he was handsome of face and figure, and had a gentle voice. Messer Gabriello Cesano was quite the opposite, as ugly and displeasing as the other was agreeable; accordingly he spoke as he looked.

Messer Luigi had suggested that I should fashion a Venus with Cupid, surrounded by a crowd of pretty emblems, all in proper keeping with the subject. Messer Gabriello proposed that I should model an Amphitrite, the wife of Neptune, together with those Tritons of the sea, and many such-like fancies, good enough to describe in words, but not to execute in metal.

I first laid down an oval framework, considerably longer than half a cubit—almost two-thirds, in fact; and upon this ground, wishing to suggest the interminglement of land and ocean, I modelled two figures, considerably taller than a palm in height, which were seated with their legs interlaced, suggesting those lengthier branches of the sea which run up into the continents. The sea was a man, and in his hand I placed a ship, elaborately wrought in all its details, and well adapted to hold a quantity of salt. Beneath him I grouped the four sea-horses, and in his right hand he held his trident. The earth I fashioned like a woman, with all the beauty of form,

THE PERSEUS BY CELLINI
(FLORENCE)

the grace, and charm of which my art was capable. She had a richly decorated temple firmly based upon the ground at one side; and here her hand rested. This I intended to receive the pepper. In her other hand I put a cornucopia, overflowing with all the natural treasures I could think of. Below this goddess, in the part which represented earth, I collected the fairest animals that haunt our globe. In the quarter presided over by the deity of ocean, I fashioned such choice kinds of fishes and shells as could be properly displayed in that small space. What remained of the oval I filled in with luxuriant ornamentation.

Then I waited for the Cardinal; and when he came, attended by the two accomplished gentlemen, I produced the model I had made in wax. On beholding it, Messer Gabriel Cesano was the first to lift his voice up, and to cry: "This is a piece which it will take the lives of ten men to finish: do not expect, most reverend monsignor, if you order it, to get it in your lifetime. Benvenuto, it seems, has chosen to display his children in a vision, but not to give them to the touch, as we did when we spoke of things that could be carried out, while he has shown a thing beyond the bounds of possibility." Messer Alamanni took my side; but the Cardinal said he did not care to undertake so important an affair. Then I turned to them and said: "Most reverend monsignor, and you, gentlemen, fulfilled with learning; I tell you that I hope to complete this piece for whosoever shall be destined to possess it;[1] and each one of you shall live to see it executed a hundred times more richly

[1] *A chi l'arà avere. For whomsoever it is going to belong to.*

than the model. Indeed, I hope that time will be left me to produce far greater things than this." The Cardinal replied in heat: "Unless you make it for the King, to whom I mean to take you, I do not think that you will make it for another man alive." Then he showed me letters in which the King, under one heading, bade him return as soon as possible, bringing Benvenuto with him. At this I raised my hands to heaven, exclaiming: "Oh, when will that moment come, and quickly?" The Cardinal bade me put myself in readiness, and arrange the affairs I had in Rome. He gave me ten days for these preparations.

III

When the time came to travel, he gave me a fine and excellent horse. The animal was called Tornon, because it was a gift from the Cardinal Tornon.[1] My apprentices, Pagolo and Ascanio, were also furnished with good mounts.

The Cardinal divided his household, which was very numerous, into two sections. The first, and the more distinguished, he took with him, following the route of Romagna, with the object of visiting Madonna del Loreto, and then making for Ferrara, his own home. The other section he sent upon the road to Florence. This was the larger train; it counted a great multitude, including the flower of his horse. He told me that if I wished to make the journey without peril, I had better go with him,

[1] *This was the famous François de Tournon, made Cardinal in* 1530, *and employed as minister by François I.*

otherwise I ran some risk of my life. I expressed my inclination to his most reverend lordship to travel in his suite. But, having done so, since the will of Heaven must be accomplished, it pleased God to remind me of my poor sister, who had suffered greatly from the news of my misfortunes. I also remembered my cousins, who were nuns in Viterbo, the one abbess and the other camerlinga,[1] and who had therefore that rich convent under their control. They too had endured sore tribulation for my sake, and to their fervent prayers I firmly believed that I owed the grace of my deliverance by God. Accordingly, when these things came into my mind, I decided for the route to Florence. I might have travelled free of expense with the Cardinal or with that other train of his, but I chose to take my own way by myself. Eventually I joined company with a very famous clockmaker, called Maestro Cherubino, my esteemed friend. Thrown together by accident, we performed the journey with much enjoyment on both sides.

I had left Rome on Monday in Passion Week, together with Pagolo and Ascanio.[2] At Monte Ruosi we joined the company which I have mentioned. Since I had expressed my intention of following the Cardinal, I did not anticipate that any of my enemies would be upon the watch to harm me. Yet I ran a narrow risk of coming to grief at Monte Ruosi; for a band of men had been sent forward, well armed,

[1] *This official in a convent was the same as cellarer or superintendent of the cellar and provisions.*

[2] *This was March 22, 1540.*

to do me mischief there. It was so ordained by God that, while we were at dinner, these fellows, on the news that I was not travelling in the Cardinal's suite, made preparation to attack me. Just at that moment the Cardinal's retinue arrived, and I was glad enough to travel with their escort safely to Viterbo. From that place onward I had no apprehension of danger, especially as I made a point of travelling a few miles in front, and the best men of the retinue kept a good watch over me.[1] I arrived by God's grace safe and sound at Viterbo, where my cousins and all the convent received me with the greatest kindness.

IV

After leaving Viterbo with the comrades I have mentioned, we pursued our journey on horseback, sometimes in front and sometimes behind the Cardinal's household. This brought us upon Maundy Thursday at twenty-two o'clock within one stage of Siena. At this place there happened to be some return-horses; and the people of the post were waiting for an opportunity to hire them at a small fee to any traveller who would take them back to the post-station in Siena. When I was aware of this, I dismounted from my horse Tornon, saddled one of the beasts with my pad and stirrups, and gave a giulio to the groom in waiting.[2]

[1] *Tenevano molto conto di me. This is perhaps equivalent to held me in high esteem. But Cellini uses the same phrase with the meaning I have given above, in Book I. chap. lxxxvi.*

[2] *The word I have translated by "pad" above is cucino in the original. It seems to have been a sort of cushion flung upon the saddle, and to which the stirrups were attached.*

I left my horse under the care of my young men to bring after me, and rode on in front, wishing to arrive half-an-hour earlier in Siena, where I had some friends to visit and some business to transact. Although I went at a smart pace, I did not override the post-horse. When I reached Siena, I engaged good rooms at the inn for five persons, and told the groom of the house to take the horse back to the post, which was outside the Camollía gate; I forgot, however, to remove my stirrups and my pad.

That evening of Holy Thursday we passed together with much gaiety; and next morning, which was Good Friday, I remembered my stirrups and my pad. On my sending for them, the postmaster replied that he did not mean to give them up, because I had overridden his horse. We exchanged messages several times, and he kept saying that he meant to keep them, adding expressions of intolerable insult. The host where I was lodging told me: "You will get off well if he does nothing worse than to detain your gear; for you must know that he is the most brutal fellow that ever disgraced our city, and has two sons, soldiers of great courage, who are even more brutal than he is. I advise you then to purchase what you want, and to pursue your journey without moving farther in this matter."

I bought a new pair of stirrups, although I still hoped to regain my good pad by persuasion; and since I was very well mounted, and well armed with shirt and sleeves of mail, and carried an excellent arquebuse upon my saddle-bow, I was not afraid of the brutality and violence which that mad beast was said

to be possessed of. I had also accustomed my young men to carry shirts of mail, and had great confidence in the Roman, who, while we were in Rome together, had never left it off, so far as I could see; Ascanio too, although he was but a stripling, was in the habit of wearing one. Besides, as it was Good Friday, I imagined that the madnesses of madmen might be giving themselves a holiday. When we came to the Camollía gate, I at once recognised the postmaster by the indications given me; for he was blind of the left eye. Riding up to him then, and leaving my young men and companions at a little distance, I courteously addressed him: "Master of the post, if I assure you that I did not override your horse, why are you unwilling to give me back my pad and stirrups?" The reply he made was precisely as mad and brutal as had been foretold me. This roused me to exclaim: "How then! are you not a Christian? or do you want upon Good Friday to force us both into a scandal?" He answered that Good Friday or the Devil's Friday was all the same to him, and that if I did not take myself away, he would fell me to the ground with a spontoon which he had taken up—me and the arquebuse I had my hand on. Upon hearing these truculent words, an old gentleman of Siena joined us; he was dressed like a citizen, and was returning from the religious functions proper to that day. It seems that he had gathered the sense of my arguments before he came up to where we stood; and this impelled him to rebuke the postmaster with warmth, taking my side, and reprimanding the man's two sons for not doing their duty to passing strangers;

so that their manners were an offence to God and a disgrace to the city of Siena. The two young fellows wagged their heads without saying a word, and withdrew inside the house. Their father, stung to fury by the scolding of that respectable gentleman, poured out a volley of abusive blasphemies, and levelled his spontoon, swearing he would murder me. When I saw him determined to do some act of bestial violence, I pointed the muzzle of my arquebuse, with the object only of keeping him at a distance. Doubly enraged by this, he flung himself upon me. Though I had prepared the arquebuse for my defence, I had not yet levelled it exactly at him; indeed it was pointed too high. It went off of itself; and the ball, striking the arch of the door and glancing backwards, wounded him in the throat, so that he fell dead to earth. Upon this the two young men came running out; one caught up a partisan from the rack which stood there, the other seized the spontoon of his father. Springing upon my followers, the one who had the spontoon smote Pagolo the Roman first above the left nipple. The other attacked a Milanese who was in our company, and had the ways and manners of a perfect fool. This man screamed out that he had nothing in the world to do with me, and parried the point of the partisan with a little stick he held; but this availed him naught: in spite of his words and fencing, he received a flesh wound in the mouth. Messer Cherubino wore the habit of a priest; for though he was a clockmaker by trade, he held benefices of some value from the Pope. Ascanio, who was well armed, stood his ground without trying to

escape, as the Milanese had done; so these two came off unhurt. I had set spurs to my horse, and while he was galloping, had charged and got my arquebuse in readiness again; but now I turned back, burning with fury, and meaning to play my part this time in earnest. I thought that my young men had been killed, and was resolved to die with them. The horse had not gone many paces when I met them riding toward me, and asked if they were hurt. Ascanio answered that Pagolo was wounded to the death. Then I said: "O Pagolo, my son, did the spontoon then pierce through your armour?" "No," he replied, "for I put my shirt of mail in the valise this morning." "So then, I suppose, one wears chain-mail in Rome to swagger before ladies, but where there is danger, and one wants it, one keeps it locked up in a portmanteau? You deserve what you have got, and you are now the cause of sending me back to die here too." While I was uttering these words, I kept riding briskly onward; but both the young men implored me for the love of God to save myself and them, and not to rush on certain death. Just then I met Messer Cherubino and the wounded Milanese. The former cried out that no one was badly wounded; the blow given to Pagolo had only grazed the skin;[1] but the old postmaster was stretched out dead; his sons with other folk were getting ready for attack, and we must almost certainly be cut to pieces: "Accordingly, Benvenuto, since fortune has saved us from this first tempest, do not tempt her again, for things may not go so favourably a second time."

[1] *The Italian is peculiar: il colpo di Pagolo era ito tanto ritto che non era isfandato.*

To this I replied: "If you are satisfied to have it thus, so also am I;" and turning to Pagolo and Ascanio, I said: "Strike spurs to your horses, and let us gallop to Staggia without stopping;[1] there we shall be in safety." The wounded Milanese groaned out: "A pox upon our peccadilloes! the sole cause of my misfortune was that I sinned by taking a little broth this morning, having nothing else to break my fast with." In spite of the great peril we were in, we could not help laughing a little at the donkey and his silly speeches. Then we set spurs to our horses, and left Messer Cherubino and the Milanese to follow at their leisure.

V

While we were making our escape, the sons of the dead man ran to the Duke of Melfi, and begged for some light horsemen to catch us up and take us prisoners.[2] The Duke, upon being informed that we were the Cardinal of Ferrara's men, refused to give them troops or leave to follow. We meanwhile arrived at Staggia, where we were in safety. There we sent for a doctor, the best who could be had in such a place; and on his examining Pagolo, we discovered that the wound was only skin-deep; so I felt sure[3] that he would escape without mischief. Then we ordered dinner; and at this juncture there arrived Messer Cherubino and that Milanese simpleton, who

[1] *Staggia is the next post on the way to Florence.*

[2] *The Duke of Melfi, or Amalfi, was at this time Alfonso Piccolomini, acting as captain-general of the Sienese in the interests of Charles V.*

[3] *Cognobbi. The subject to this verb may be either Cellini or the doctor.*

kept always muttering: "A plague upon your quarrels," and complaining that he was excommunicated because he had not been able to say a single Paternoster on that holy morning. He was very ugly, and his mouth, which nature had made large, had been expanded at least three inches by his wound; so that what with his ludicrous Milanese jargon and his silly way of talking, he gave us so much matter for mirth, that, instead of bemoaning our ill-luck, we could not hold from laughing at every word he uttered. When the doctor wanted to sew up his wound, and had already made three stitches with his needle, the fellow told him to hold hard awhile, since he did not want him out of malice to sew his whole mouth up. Then he took up a spoon, and said he wished to have his mouth left open enough to take that spoon in, in order that he might return alive to his own folk. These things he said with such odd waggings of the head, that we never stopped from laughing, and so pursued our journey mirthfully to Florence.

We dismounted at the house of my poor sister, who, together with her husband, overwhelmed us with kind attentions. Messer Cherubino and the Milanese went about their business. In Florence we remained four days, during which Pagolo got well. It was lucky for us that whenever we talked about that Milanese donkey, we laughed as much as our misfortunes made us weep, so that we kept laughing and crying both at the same moment.

Pagolo recovered, as I have said, with ease; and then we travelled toward Ferrara, where we found our lord the Cardinal had not yet arrived. He had

POPE PAUL III
(TITIAN)

already heard of all our accidents, and said, when he expressed his concern for them: "I pray to God that I may be allowed to bring you alive to the King, according to my promise." In Ferrara he sent me to reside at a palace of his, a very handsome place called Belfiore, close under the city walls. There he provided me with all things necessary for my work. A little later, he arranged to leave for France without me; and observing that I was very ill pleased with this, he said to me: "Benvenuto, I am acting for your welfare; before I take you out of Italy, I want you to know exactly what you will have to do when you come to France. Meanwhile, push on my basin and the jug with all the speed you can. I shall leave orders with my factor to give you everything that you may want."

He then departed, and I remained sorely dissatisfied, and more than once I was upon the point of taking myself off without license. The only thing which kept me back was that he had procured my freedom from Pope Paolo; for the rest, I was ill-contented and put to considerable losses. However, I clothed my mind with the gratitude due to that great benefit, and disposed myself to be patient and to await the termination of the business. So I set myself to work with my two men, and made great progress with the jug and basin. The air was unwholesome where we lodged, and toward summer we all of us suffered somewhat in our health. During our indisposition we went about inspecting the domain; it was very large, and left in a wild state for about a mile of open ground, haunted too by multitudes

of peacocks, which bred and nested there like wild-fowl. This put it into my head to charge my gun with a noiseless kind of powder; then I tracked some of the young birds, and every other day killed one, which furnished us with abundance of meat, of such excellent quality that we shook our sickness off. For several months following we went on working merrily, and got the jug and basin forward; but it was a task that required much time.

VI

At that period the Duke of Ferrara came to terms with Pope Paul about some old matters in dispute between them relating to Modena and certain other cities. The Church having a strong claim to them, the Duke was forced to purchase peace by paying down an enormous sum of money; I think that it exceeded three hundred thousand ducats of the Camera. There was an old treasurer in the service of the Duke, who had been brought up by his father, Duke Alfonso, and was called Messer Girolamo Giliolo. He could not endure to see so much money going to the Pope, and went about the streets crying: "Duke Alfonso, his father, would sooner have attacked and taken Rome with this money than have shown it to the Pope." Nothing would induce him to disburse it; at last, however, the Duke compelled him to make the payments, which caused the old man such anguish that he sickened of a dangerous colic and was brought to death's door. During this man's illness the Duke sent for me, and bade me take his portrait; this I did upon a circular piece of

black stone about the size of a little trencher. The Duke took so much pleasure in my work and conversation, that he not unfrequently posed through four or five hours at a stretch for his own portrait, and sometimes invited me to supper. It took me eight days to complete his likeness; then he ordered me to design the reverse. On it I modelled Peace, giving her the form of a woman with a torch in her hand, setting fire to a trophy of arms; I portrayed her in an attitude of gladness, with very thin drapery, and below her feet lay Fury in despair, downcast and sad, and loaded with chains. I devoted much study and attention to this work, and it won me the greatest honour. The Duke was never tired of expressing his satisfaction, and gave me inscriptions for both sides of the medal. That on the reverse ran as follows: *Pretiosa in conspectu Domini;* it meant that his peace with the Pope had been dearly bought.

VII

While I was still engaged upon the reverse of this medal, the Cardinal sent me letters bidding me prepare for my journey, since the King had asked after me. His next communication would contain full details respecting all that he had promised. Accordingly, I had my jug and basin packed up, after showing them to the Duke. Now a Ferrarese gentleman named Alberto Bendedio was the Cardinal's agent, and he had been twelve years confined to his house, without once leaving it, by reason of some physical infirmity. One day he sent in a vast hurry for me, saying I must take the post at once, in order to pre-

sent myself before the King of France, who had eagerly been asking for me, under the impression that I was in France. By way of apology, the Cardinal told him that I was staying, slightly indisposed, in his abbey at Lyons, but that he would have me brought immediately to his Majesty. Therefore I must lose no time, but travel with the post.

Now Messer Alberto was a man of sterling worth, but proud, and illness had made his haughty temper insupportable. As I have just said, he bade me to get ready on the spot and take the journey by the common post. I said that it was not the custom to pursue my profession in the post, and that if I had to go, it was my intention to make easy stages and to take with me the workmen Ascanio and Pagolo, whom I had brought from Rome. Moreover, I wanted a servant on horseback to be at my orders, and money sufficient for my costs upon the way. The infirm old man replied, upon a tone of mighty haughtiness, that the sons of dukes were wont to travel as I had described, and in no other fashion. I retorted that the sons of my art travelled in the way I had informed him, and that not being a duke's son, I knew nothing about the customs of such folk; if he treated me to language with which my ears were unfamiliar, I would not go at all; the Cardinal having broken faith with me, and such scurvy words having been spoken, I should make my mind up once for all to take no further trouble with the Ferrarese. Then I turned my back, and, he threatening, I grumbling, took my leave.

I next went to the Duke with my medal, which

was finished. He received me with the highest marks of honour and esteem. It seems that he had given orders to Messer Girolamo Giliolo to reward me for my labour with a diamond ring worth two hundred crowns, which was to be presented by Fiaschino, his chamberlain. Accordingly, this fellow, on the evening after I had brought the medal, at one hour past nightfall, handed me a ring with a diamond of showy appearance, and spoke as follows on the part of his master: "Take this diamond as a remembrance of his Excellency, to adorn the unique artist's hand which has produced a masterpiece of so singular merit." When day broke, I examined the ring, and found the stone to be a miserable thin diamond, worth about ten crowns. I felt sure that the Duke had not meant to accompany such magnificent compliments with so trifling a gift, but that he must have intended to reward me handsomely. Being then convinced that the trick proceeded from his rogue of a treasurer, I gave the ring to a friend of mine, begging him to return it to the chamberlain, Fiaschino, as he best could. The man I chose was Bernardo Saliti, who executed his commission admirably. Fiaschino came at once to see me, and declared, with vehement expostulations, that the Duke would take it very ill if I refused a present he had meant so kindly; perhaps I should have to repent of my waywardness. I answered that the ring his Excellency had given me was worth about ten crowns, and that the work I had done for him was worth more than two hundred. Wishing, however, to show his Excellency how highly I esteemed his courtesy, I

should be happy if he bestowed on me only one of those rings for the cramp, which come from England and are worth tenpence.[1] I would treasure that so long as I lived in remembrance of his Excellency, together with the honourable message he had sent me; for I considered that the splendid favours of his Excellency had amply recompensed my pains, whereas that paltry stone insulted them. This speech annoyed the Duke so much that he sent for his treasurer, and scolded him more sharply than he had ever done before. At the same time he gave me orders, under pain of his displeasure, not to leave Ferrara without duly informing him; and commanded the treasurer to present me with a diamond up to three hundred crowns in value. The miserly official found a stone rising a trifle above sixty crowns, and let it be heard that it was worth upwards of two hundred.

VIII

Meanwhile Messer Alberto returned to reason, and provided me with all I had demanded. My mind was made up to quit Ferrara without fail that very day; but the Duke's attentive chamberlain arranged with Messer Alberto that I should get no horses then. I had loaded a mule with my baggage, including the case which held the Cardinal's jug and basin. Just then a Ferrarese nobleman named Messer Alfonso de' Trotti arrived.[2] He was far advanced in years, and a person of excessive affectation; a great dilettante

[1] *Anello del granchio, a metal ring of lead and copper, such as are now worn in Italy under the name of anello di salute.*

[2] *This man was a member of a very noble Ferrarese family, and much esteemed for his official talents.*

of the arts, but one of those men who are very difficult to satisfy, and who, if they chance to stumble on something which suits their taste, exalt it so in their own fancy that they never expect to see the like of it again. Well, this Messer Alfonso arrived, and Messer Alberto said to him: "I am sorry that you are come so late; the jug and basin we are sending to the Cardinal in France have been already packed." He answered that it did not signify to him; and beckoning to his servant, sent him home to fetch a jug in white Faenzo clay, the workmanship of which was very exquisite. During the time the servant took to go and return, Messer Alfonso said to Messer Alberto: "I will tell you why I do not care any longer to look at vases; it is that I once beheld a piece of silver, antique, of such beauty and such finish that the human imagination cannot possibly conceive its rarity. Therefore I would rather not inspect any objects of the kind, for fear of spoiling the unique impression I retain of that. I must tell you that a gentleman of great quality and accomplishments, who went to Rome upon matters of business, had this antique vase shown to him in secret. By adroitly using a large sum of money, he bribed the person in whose hands it was, and brought it with him to these parts; but he keeps it jealously from all eyes, in order that the Duke may not get wind of it, fearing he should in some way be deprived of his treasure." While spinning out this lengthy yarn, Messer Alfonso did not look at me, because we were not previously acquainted. But when that precious clay model appeared, he displayed it with such

airs of ostentation, pomp, and mountebank ceremony, that, after inspecting it, I turned to Messer Alberto and said: "I am indeed lucky to have had the privilege to see it!"[1] Messer Alfonso, quite affronted, let some contemptuous words escape him, and exclaimed: "Who are you, then, you who do not know what you are saying?" I replied: "Listen for a moment, and afterwards judge which of us knows best what he is saying." Then turning to Messer Alberto, who was a man of great gravity and talent, I began: "This is a copy from a little silver goblet, of such and such a weight, which I made at such and such a time for that charlatan Maestro Jacopo, the surgeon from Carpi. He came to Rome and spent six months there, during which he bedaubed some scores of noblemen and unfortunate gentlefolk with his dirty salves, extracting many thousands of ducats from their pockets. At that time I made for him this vase and one of a different pattern. He paid me very badly; and at the present moment in Rome all the miserable people who used his ointment are crippled and in a deplorable state of health.[2] It is indeed great glory for me that my works are held in such repute among you wealthy lords; but I can assure you that during these many years past I have been progressing in my art with all my might, and I think that the vase I am taking with me into France is far more worthy of cardinals and kings than that piece belonging to your little quack doctor."

[1] *Pur beato che io l'ho veduto! Leclanché translates thus: "Par Dieu! il y a longtemps que je l'ai vu!" I think Cellini probably meant to hint that he had seen it before.*

[2] *See Vol. I., p. 138, for this story.*

After I had made this speech, Messer Alfonso seemed dying with desire to see the jug and basin, but I refused to open the box. We remained some while disputing the matter, when he said that he would go to the Duke and get an order from his Excellency to have it shown him. Then Messer Alberto Bendedio, in the high and mighty manner which belonged to him, exclaimed: "Before you leave this room, Messer Alfonso, you shall see it, without employing the Duke's influence." On hearing these words I took my leave, and left Ascanio and Pagolo to show it. They told me afterwards that he had spoken enthusiastically in my praise. After this he wanted to become better acquainted with me; but I was wearying to leave Ferrara and get away from all its folk. The only advantages I had enjoyed there were the society of Cardinal Salviati and the Cardinal of Ravenna, and the friendship of some ingenious musicians;[1] no one else had been to me of any good; for the Ferrarese are a very avaricious people, greedy of their neighbours' money, however they may lay their hands on it; they are all the same in this respect.

At the hour of twenty-two Fiaschino arrived, and gave me the diamond of sixty crowns, of which I spoke above. He told me, with a hang-dog look and a few brief words, that I might wear it for his Excellency's sake. I replied: "I will do so." Then putting my foot in the stirrup in his presence, I set

[1] *Cardinal Giovanni Salviati was Archbishop of Ferrara; Cardinal Benedetto Accolti, Archbishop of Ravenna, was then staying at Ferrara; the court was famous for its excellent orchestra and theatrical display of all kinds.*

off upon my travels without further leave-taking. The man noted down my act and words, and reported them to the Duke, who was highly incensed, and showed a strong inclination to make me retrace my steps.

IX

That evening I rode more than ten miles, always at a trot; and when, upon the next day, I found myself outside the Ferrarese domain, I felt excessively relieved; indeed I had met with nothing to my liking there, except those peacocks which restored my health. We journeyed by the Monsanese, avoiding the city of Milan on account of the apprehension I have spoken of;[1] so that we arrived safe and sound at Lyons. Counting Pagolo and Ascanio and a servant, we were four men, with four very good horses. At Lyons we waited several days for the muleteer, who carried the silver cup and basin, as well as our other baggage; our lodging was in an abbey of the Cardinal's. When the muleteer arrived, we loaded all our goods upon a little cart, and then set off toward Paris. On the road we met with some annoyances, but not of any great moment.

We found the Court of the King at Fontana Beliò;[2] there we presented ourselves to the Cardinal, who provided us at once with lodgings, and that evening we were comfortable. On the following day the cart turned up; so we unpacked our things, and

[1] *The Monsanese is the Mont Cenis. Cellini forgets that he has not mentioned this apprehension which made him turn aside from Milan. It may have been the fear of plague, or perhaps of some enemy.*

[2] *It is thus that Cellini always writes Fontainebleau.*

when the Cardinal heard this he told the King, who expressed a wish to see me at once. I went to his Majesty with the cup and basin; then, upon entering his presence, I kissed his knee, and he received me very graciously. I thanked his Majesty for freeing me from prison, saying that all princes unique for generosity upon this earth, as was his Majesty, lay under special obligations to set free men of talent, and particularly those that were innocent, as I was; such benefits, I added, were inscribed upon the book of God before any other good actions. The King, while I was delivering this speech, continued listening till the end with the utmost courtesy, dropping a few words such as only he could utter. Then he took the vase and basin, and exclaimed: "Of a truth I hardly think the ancients can have seen a piece so beautiful as this. I well remember to have inspected all the best works, and by the greatest masters of all Italy, but I never set my eyes on anything which stirred me to such admiration." These words the King addressed in French to the Cardinal of Ferrara, with many others of even warmer praise. Then he turned to me and said in Italian: "Benvenuto, amuse yourself for a few days, make good cheer, and spend your time in pleasure; in the meanwhile we will think of giving you the wherewithal to execute some fine works of art for us."

X

The Cardinal of Ferrara saw that the King had been vastly pleased by my arrival; he also judged that the trifles which I showed him of my handicraft had

encouraged him to hope for the execution of some considerable things he had in mind. At this time, however, we were following the court with the weariest trouble and fatigue; the reason of this was that the train of the King drags itself along with never less than 12,000 horse behind it; this calculation is the very lowest; for when the court is complete in times of peace, there are some 18,000, which makes 12,000 less than the average. Consequently we had to journey after it through places where sometimes there were scarcely two houses to be found; and then we set up canvas tents like gipsies, and suffered at times very great discomfort. I therefore kept urging the Cardinal to put the King in mind of employing me in some locality where I could stop and work. The Cardinal answered that it was far better to wait until the King should think of it himself, and that I ought to show myself at times to his Majesty while he was at table. This I did then; and one morning, at his dinner, the King called me. He began to talk to me in Italian, saying he had it in his mind to execute several great works, and that he would soon give orders where I was to labour, and provide me with all necessaries. These communications he mingled with discourse on divers pleasant matters. The Cardinal of Ferrara was there, because he almost always ate in the morning at the King's table. He had heard our conversation, and when the King rose, he spoke in my favour to this purport, as I afterwards was informed: "Sacred Majesty, this man Benvenuto is very eager to get to work again; it seems almost a sin to let an artist

of his abilities waste his time." The King replied that he had spoken well, and told him to arrange with me all things for my support according to my wishes.

Upon the evening of the day when he received this commission, the Cardinal sent for me after supper, and told me that his Majesty was resolved to let me begin working, but that he wanted me first to come to an understanding about my appointments. To this the Cardinal added: "It seems to me that if his Majesty allows you three hundred crowns a year, you will be able to keep yourself very well indeed; furthermore, I advise you to leave yourself in my hands, for every day offers the opportunity of doing some service in this great kingdom, and I shall exert myself with vigour in your interest." Then I began to speak as follows: "When your most reverend lordship left me in Ferrara, you gave me a promise, which I had never asked for, not to bring me out of Italy before I clearly understood the terms on which I should be placed here with his Majesty. Instead of sending to communicate these details, your most reverend lordship urgently ordered me to come by the post, as if an art like mine was carried on post-haste. Had you written to tell me of three hundred crowns, as you have now spoken, I would not have stirred a foot for twice that sum. Nevertheless, I thank God and your most reverend lordship for all things, seeing God has employed you as the instrument for my great good in procuring my liberation from imprisonment. Therefore I assure your lordship that all the trou-

bles you are now causing me fall a thousand times short of the great good which you have done me. With all my heart I thank you, and take good leave of you; wherever I may be, so long as I have life, I will pray God for you." The Cardinal was greatly irritated, and cried out in a rage: "Go where you choose; it is impossible to help people against their will." Some of his good-for-nothing courtiers who were present said: "That fellow sets great store on himself, for he is refusing three hundred ducats a year." Another, who was a man of talent, replied: "The King will never find his equal, and our Cardinal wants to cheapen him, as though he were a load of wood." This was Messer Luigi Alamanni who spoke to the above effect, as I was afterwards informed. All this happened on the last day of October, in Dauphiné, at a castle the name of which I do not remember.

XI

On leaving the Cardinal I repaired to my lodging, which was three miles distant, in company with a secretary of the Cardinal returning to the same quarters. On the road, this man never stopped asking me what I meant to do with myself, and what my own terms regarding the appointment would have been. I gave him only one word back for answer, which was that—I knew all. When we came to our quarters, I found Pagolo and Ascanio there; and seeing me much troubled, they implored me to tell them what was the matter. To the poor young men, who were all dismayed, I said for answer: "To-morrow I

shall give you money amply sufficient for your journey home. I mean myself to go about a most important business without you, which for a long time I have had it in my mind to do." Our room adjoined that of the secretary; and I think it not improbable that he wrote to the Cardinal, and informed him of my purpose. However, I never knew anything for certain about this. The night passed without sleep, and I kept wearying for the day, in order to carry out my resolution.

No sooner did it dawn than I ordered out the horses, made my preparations in a moment, and gave the two young men everything which I had brought with me, and fifty ducats of gold in addition. I reserved the same sum for myself, together with the diamond the Duke had given me: I only kept two shirts and some well-worn riding-clothes which I had upon my back. I found it almost impossible to get free of the two young men, who insisted upon going with me, whatever happened. At last I was obliged to treat them with contempt, and use this language: "One of you has his first beard, and the other is just getting it; and both of you have learned as much from me as I could teach in my poor art, so that you are now the first craftsmen among the youths of Italy. Are you not ashamed to have no courage to quit this go-cart, but must always creep about in leading-strings? The thing is too disgraceful! Or if I were to send you away without money, what would you say then? Come, take yourselves out of my sight, and may God bless you a thousand times. Farewell!"

I turned my horse and left them weeping. Then

I took my way along a very fair road through a forest, hoping to make at least forty miles that day, and reach the most out-of-the-way place I could. I had already ridden about two miles, and during that short time had resolved never to revisit any of those parts where I was known. I also determined to abandon my art so soon as I had made a Christ three cubits in height, reproducing, so far as I was able, that infinite beauty which He had Himself revealed to me. So then, being thoroughly resolved, I turned my face toward the Holy Sepulchre.[1] Just when I thought I had got so far that nobody could find me, I heard horses galloping after. They filled me with some uneasiness, because that district is infested with a race of brigands, who bear the name of Venturers, and are apt to murder men upon the road. Though numbers of them are hanged every day, it seems as though they did not care. However, when the riders approached, I found they were a messenger from the King and my lad Ascanio. The former came up to me and said: "From the King I order you to come immediately to his presence." I replied: "You have been sent by the Cardinal, and for this reason I will not come." The man said that since gentle usage would not bring me, he had authority to raise the folk, and they would take me bound hand and foot like a prisoner. Ascanio, for his part, did all he could to persuade me, reminding me that when the King sent a man to prison, he kept him there five years at least before he let him out again. This word about the prison, when I re-

[1] *See above, p. 61, for Cellini's vow in the Castle of S. Angelo.*

membered what I had endured in Rome, struck such terror into me, that I wheeled my horse round briskly and followed the King's messenger. He kept perpetually chattering in French through all our journey, up to the very precincts of the court, at one time bullying, now saying one thing, then another, till I felt inclined to deny God and the world.

XII

On our way to the lodgings of the King we passed before those of the Cardinal of Ferrara. Standing at his door, he called to me and said: "Our most Christian monarch has of his own accord assigned you the same appointments which his Majesty allowed the painter Lionardo da Vinci, that is, a salary of seven hundred crowns; in addition, he will pay you for all the works you do for him; also for your journey hither he gives you five hundred golden crowns, which will be paid you before you quit this place." At the end of this announcement, I replied that those were offers worthy of the great King he was. The messenger, not knowing anything about me, and hearing what splendid offers had been made me by the King, begged my pardon over and over again. Pagolo and Ascanio exclaimed: "It is God who has helped us to get back into so honoured a go-cart!"

On the day following I went to thank the King, who ordered me to make the models of twelve silver statues, which were to stand as candelabra round his table. He wanted them to represent six gods and six goddesses, and to have exactly the same height as

his Majesty, which was a trifle under four cubits. Having dictated this commission, he turned to his treasurer, and asked whether he had paid me the five hundred crowns. The official said that he had received no orders to that effect. The King took this very ill, for he had requested the Cardinal to speak to him about it. Furthermore, he told me to go to Paris and seek out a place to live in, fitted for the execution of such works; he would see that I obtained it.

I got the five hundred crowns of gold, and took up my quarters at Paris in a house of the Cardinal of Ferrara. There I began, in God's name, to work, and fashioned four little waxen models, about two-thirds of a cubit each in height. They were Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, and Vulcan. In this while the King returned to Paris; whereupon I went to him at once, taking my models with me, and my two prentices, Ascanio and Pagolo. On perceiving that the King was pleased with my work, and being commissioned to execute the Jupiter in silver of the height above described, I introduced the two young men, and said that I had brought them with me out of Italy to serve his Majesty; for inasmuch as they had been brought up by me, I could at the beginning get more help from them than from the Paris workmen. To this the King replied that I might name a salary which I thought sufficient for their maintenance. I said that a hundred crowns of gold apiece would be quite proper, and that I would make them earn their wages well. This agreement was concluded. Then I said that I had found a place which seemed to me exactly suited to my industry; it was his Majesty's own pro-

perty, and called the Little Nello. The Provost of Paris was then in possession of it from his Majesty; but since the Provost made no use of the castle, his Majesty perhaps might grant it me to employ in his service.' He replied upon the instant: "That place is my own house, and I know well that the man I gave it to does not inhabit or use it. So you shall have it for the work you have to do." He then told his lieutenant to install me in the Nello. This officer made some resistance, pleading that he could not carry out the order. The King answered in anger that he meant to bestow his property on whom he pleased, and on a man who would serve him, seeing that he got nothing from the other; therefore he would hear no more about it. The lieutenant then submitted that some small force would have to be employed in order to effect an entrance. To which the King answered: "Go, then, and if a small force is not enough, use a great one."

The officer took me immediately to the castle, and there put me in possession, not, however, without violence; after that he warned me to take very good care that I was not murdered. I installed myself, enrolled serving-men, and bought a quantity of pikes and partisans; but I remained for several days exposed to grievous annoyances, for the Provost was a great nobleman of Paris, and all the other gentlefolk took part against me; they attacked me with such insults that I could hardly hold my own against them. I must not omit to mention that I entered the

[1] *This was the castle of Le Petit Nesle, on the site of which now stands the Palace of the Institute. The Provost of Paris was then Jean d'Estouteville, lord of Villebon.*

service of his Majesty in the year 1540, which was exactly the year in which I reached the age of forty.

XIII

The affronts and insults I received made me have recourse to the King, begging his Majesty to establish me in some other place. He answered: "Who are you, and what is your name?" I remained in great confusion, and could not comprehend what he meant. Holding my tongue thus, the King repeated the same words a second time angrily. Then I said my name was Benvenuto. "If, then, you are the Benvenuto of whom I have heard," replied the King, "act according to your wont, for you have my full leave to do so." I told his Majesty that all I wanted was to keep his favour; for the rest, I knew of nothing that could harm me. He gave a little laugh, and said: "Go your ways, then; you shall never want my favour." Upon this he told his first secretary, Monsignor di Villerois, to see me provided and accommodated with all I needed.[1]

This Villerois was an intimate friend of the Provost, to whom the castle had been given. It was built in a triangle, right up against the city walls, and was of some antiquity, but had no garrison. The building was of considerable size. Monsignor di Villerois counselled me to look about for something else, and by all means to leave this place alone, seeing that its owner was a man of vast power, who would most assuredly have me killed. I answered that I had come from Italy to France only in order

[1] *M. Nicholas de Neufville, lord of Villeroy.*

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to serve that illustrious King; and as for dying, I knew for certain that die I must; a little earlier or a little later was a matter of supreme indifference to me.

Now Villerois was a man of the highest talent, exceptionally distinguished in all points, and possessed of vast wealth. There was nothing he would not gladly have done to harm me, but he made no open demonstration of his mind. He was grave, and of a noble presence, and spoke slowly, at his ease. To another gentleman, Monsignor di Marmagna, the treasurer of Languedoc, he left the duty of molesting me.[1] The first thing which this man did was to look out the best apartments in the castle, and to have them fitted up for himself. I told him that the King had given me the place to serve him in, and that I did not choose it should be occupied by any but myself and my attendants. The fellow, who was haughty, bold, and spirited, replied that he meant to do just what he liked; that I should run my head against a wall if I presumed to oppose him, and that Villerois had given him authority to do what he was doing. I told him that, by the King's authority given to me, neither he nor Villerois could do it. When I said that he gave vent to offensive language in French, whereat I retorted in my own tongue that he lied. Stung with rage, he clapped his hand upon a little dagger which he had; then I set my hand also to a large dirk which I always wore for my defence, and cried out: "If you dare to draw, I'll kill you on the spot." He had two servants to back him, and I had my two lads. For

[1] *François l'Allemand, Seigneur de Marmagne.*

a moment or two Marmagna stood in doubt, not knowing exactly what to do, but rather inclined to mischief, and muttering: "I will never put up with such insults." Seeing then that the affair was taking a bad turn, I took a sudden resolution, and cried to Pagolo and Ascanio: "When you see me draw my dirk, throw yourselves upon those serving-men, and kill them if you can; I mean to kill this fellow at the first stroke, and then we will decamp together, with God's grace." Marmagna, when he understood my purpose, was glad enough to get alive out of the castle.

All these things, toning them down a trifle, I wrote to the Cardinal of Ferrara, who related them at once to the King. The King, deeply irritated, committed me to the care of another officer of his bodyguard who was named Monsignor lo Iscontro d'Orbech.[1] By him I was accommodated with all that I required in the most gracious way imaginable.

XIV

After fitting up my own lodgings in the castle and the workshop with all conveniences for carrying on my business, and putting my household upon a most respectable footing, I began at once to construct three models exactly of the size which the silver statues were to be. These were Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mars. I moulded them in clay, and set them well up on irons; then I went to the King, who disbursed three hundred pounds weight of silver, if I remember rightly, for the commencement of the under-

[1] *Le Vicomte d'Orbec. It seems that by Iscontro Cellini meant Viscount.*

taking. While I was getting these things ready, we brought the little vase and oval basin to completion, which had been several months in hand. Then I had them richly gilt, and they showed like the finest piece of plate which had been seen in France.

Afterwards I took them to the Cardinal, who thanked me greatly; and, without requesting my attendance, carried and presented them to the King. He was delighted with the gift, and praised me as no artist was ever praised before. In return, he bestowed upon the Cardinal an abbey worth seven thousand crowns a year, and expressed his intention of rewarding me too. The Cardinal, however, prevented him, telling his Majesty that he was going ahead too fast, since I had as yet produced nothing for him. The King, who was exceedingly generous, replied: "For that very reason will I put heart and hope into him." The Cardinal, ashamed at his own meanness, said: "Sire, I beg you to leave that to me; I will allow him a pension of at least three hundred crowns when I have taken possession of the abbey." He never gave me anything; and it would be tedious to relate all the knavish tricks of this prelate. I prefer to dwell on matters of greater moment.

XV

When I returned to Paris, the great favour shown me by the King made me a mark for all men's admiration. I received the silver and began my statue of Jupiter. Many journeymen were now in my employ; and the work went onward briskly day and night; so that, by the time I had finished the clay models

of Jupiter, Vulcan, and Mars, and had begun to get the silver statue forward, my workshop made already a grand show.

The King now came to Paris, and I went to pay him my respects. No sooner had his Majesty set eyes upon me than he called me cheerfully, and asked if I had something fine to exhibit at my lodging, for he would come to inspect it. I related all I had been doing; upon which he was seized with a strong desire to come. Accordingly, after his dinner, he set off with Madame de Tampes, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and some other of his greatest nobles, among whom were the King of Navarre, his cousin, and the Queen, his sister; the Dauphin and Dauphiness also attended him; so that upon that day the very flower of the French court came to visit me.[1] I had been some time at home, and was hard at work. When the King arrived at the door of the castle, and heard our hammers going, he bade his company keep silence. Everybody in my house was busily employed, so that the unexpected entrance of his Majesty took me by surprise. The first thing he saw on coming into the great hall was myself with a huge plate of silver in my hand, which I was beating for the body of my Jupiter; one of my men was finishing the head, another the legs; and it is easy to imagine what a din we made between us. It happened that a little French lad was working at my side, who had just been guilty of some trifling

[1] *These personages were Madame d'Etampes, the King's mistress; John of Lorraine, son of Duke Renée II., who was made Cardinal in 1518; Henri d'Albret II. and Marguerite de Valois, his wife; the Dauphin, afterwards Henri II., and his wife, the celebrated Caterina de' Medici, daughter of Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino.*

blunder. I gave the lad a kick, and, as my good luck would have it, caught him with my foot exactly in the fork between his legs, and sent him spinning several yards, so that he came stumbling up against the King precisely at the moment when his Majesty arrived. The King was vastly amused, but I felt covered with confusion. He began to ask me what I was engaged upon, and told me to go on working; then he said that he would much rather have me not employ my strength on manual labour, but take as many men as I wanted, and make them do the rough work; he should like me to keep myself in health, in order that he might enjoy my services through many years to come. I replied to his Majesty that the moment I left off working I should fall ill; also that my art itself would suffer, and not attain the mark I aimed at for his Majesty. Thinking that I spoke thus only to brag, and not because it was the truth, he made the Cardinal of Lorraine repeat what he had said; but I explained my reasons so fully and clearly, that the Cardinal perceived my drift; he then advised the King to let me labour as much or little as I liked.

XVI

Being very well satisfied with what he had seen, the King returned to his palace, after bestowing on me too many marks of favour to be here recorded. On the following day he sent for me at his dinner-hour. The Cardinal of Ferrara was there at meat with him. When I arrived, the King had reached his second course; he began at once to speak to me, saying,

with a pleasant cheer, that having now so fine a basin and jug of my workmanship, he wanted an equally handsome salt-cellar to match them; and begged me to make a design, and to lose no time about it. I replied: "Your Majesty shall see a model of the sort even sooner than you have commanded; for while I was making the basin, I thought there ought to be a salt-cellar to match it; therefore I have already designed one, and if it is your pleasure, I will at once exhibit my conception." The King turned with a lively movement of surprise and pleasure to the lords in his company—they were the King of Navarre, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and the Cardinal of Ferrara—exclaiming as he did so: "Upon my word, this is a man to be loved and cherished by every one who knows him." Then he told me that he would very gladly see my model.

I set off, and returned in a few minutes; for I had only to cross the river, that is, the Seine. I carried with me the wax model which I had made in Rome at the Cardinal of Ferrara's request. When I appeared again before the King and uncovered my piece, he cried out in astonishment: "This is a hundred times more divine a thing than I had ever dreamed of. What a miracle of a man! He ought never to stop working." Then he turned to me with a beaming countenance, and told me that he greatly liked the piece, and wished me to execute it in gold. The Cardinal of Ferrara looked me in the face, and let me understand that he recognised the model as the same which I had made for him in Rome. I replied that I had already told him I should carry it

out for one who was worthy of it. The Cardinal, remembering my words, and nettled by the revenge he thought that I was taking on him, remarked to the King: "Sire, this is an enormous undertaking; I am only afraid that we shall never see it finished. These able artists who have great conceptions in their brain are ready enough to put the same in execution without duly considering when they are to be accomplished. I therefore, if I gave commission for things of such magnitude, should like to know when I was likely to get them." The King replied that if a man was so scrupulous about the termination of a work, he would never begin anything at all; these words he uttered with a certain look, which implied that such enterprises were not for folk of little spirit. I then began to say my say: "Princes who put heart and courage in their servants, as your Majesty does by deed and word, render undertakings of the greatest magnitude quite easy. Now that God has sent me so magnificent a patron, I hope to perform for him a multitude of great and splendid masterpieces." "I believe it," said the King, and rose from table. Then he called me into his chamber, and asked how much gold was wanted for the salt-cellar. "A thousand crowns," I answered. He called his treasurer at once, who was the Viscount of Orbec, and ordered him that very day to disburse to me a thousand crowns of good weight and old gold.

When I left his Majesty, I went for the two notaries who had helped me in procuring silver for the Jupiter and many other things. Crossing the Seine, I then took a small hand-basket, which one

of my cousins, a nun, had given me on my journey through Florence. It made for my good fortune that I took this basket and not a bag. So then, thinking I could do the business by daylight, for it was still early, and not caring to interrupt my workmen, and being indisposed to take a servant with me, I set off alone. When I reached the house of the treasurer, I found that he had the money laid out before him, and was selecting the best pieces as the King had ordered. It seemed to me, however, that that thief of a treasurer was doing all he could to postpone the payment of the money; nor were the pieces counted out until three hours after nightfall.

I meanwhile was not wanting in despatch, for I sent word to several of my journeymen that they should come and attend me, since the matter was one of serious importance. When I found that they did not arrive, I asked the messenger if he had done my errand. The rascal of a groom whom I had sent replied that he had done so, but that they had answered that they could not come; he, however, would gladly carry the money for me. I answered that I meant to carry the money myself. By this time the contract was drawn up and signed. On the money being counted, I put it all into my little basket, and then thrust my arm through the two handles. Since I did this with some difficulty, the gold was well shut in, and I carried it more conveniently than if the vehicle had been a bag. I was well armed with shirt and sleeves of mail, and having my sword and dagger at my side, made off along the street as quick as my two legs would carry me.

XVII

Just as I left the house, I observed some servants whispering among themselves, who also went off at a round pace in another direction from the one I took. Walking with all haste, I passed the bridge of the Exchange,[1] and went up along a wall beside the river which led to my lodging in the castle. I had just come to the Augustines—now this was a very perilous passage, and though it was only five hundred paces distant from my dwelling, yet the lodging in the castle being quite as far removed inside, no one could have heard my voice if I had shouted—when I saw four men with four swords in their hands advancing to attack me.[2] My resolution was taken in an instant. I covered the basket with my cape, drew my sword, and seeing that they were pushing hotly forward, cried aloud: "With soldiers there is only the cape and sword to gain; and these, before I give them up, I hope you'll get not much to your advantage." Then crossing my sword boldly with them, I more than once spread out my arms, in order that, if the ruffians were put on by the servants who had seen me take my money, they might be led to judge I was not carrying it. The encounter was soon over; for they retired step by step, saying among themselves in their own language: "This is a brave Italian, and certainly not the man we are after; or if he be the man, he cannot be carrying anything."

[1] *The Pont du Change, replaced by the Pont Neuf.*

[2] *The excitement of his recollection makes Cellini more than usually incoherent about this episode. The translator has to collect the whole sense of the passage.*

I spoke Italian, and kept harrying them with thrust and slash so hotly that I narrowly missed killing one or the other. My skill in using the sword made them think I was a soldier rather than a fellow of some other calling. They drew together and began to fall back, muttering all the while beneath their breath in their own tongue. I meanwhile continued always calling out, but not too loudly, that those who wanted my cape and blade would have to get them with some trouble. Then I quickened pace, while they still followed slowly at my heels; this augmented my fear, for I thought I might be falling into an ambuscade, which would have cut me off in front as well as rear. Accordingly, when I was at the distance of a hundred paces from my home, I ran with all my might, and shouted at the top of my voice: "To arms, to arms! out with you, out with you! I am being murdered." In a moment four of my young men came running, with four pikes in their hands. They wanted to pursue the ruffians, who could still be seen; but I stopped them, calling back so as to let the villains hear: "Those cowards yonder, four against one man alone, had not pluck enough to capture a thousand golden crowns in metal, which have almost broken this arm of mine. Let us haste inside and put the money away; then I will take my big two-handed sword, and go with you whithersoever you like." We went inside to secure the gold; and my lads, while expressing deep concern for the peril I had run, gently chided me, and said: "You risk yourself too much alone; the time will come when you will make us all bemoan your loss." A thousand

words and exclamations were exchanged between us; my adversaries took to flight; and we all sat down and supped together with mirth and gladness, laughing over those great blows which fortune strikes, for good as well as evil, and which, what time they do not hit the mark, are just the same as though they had not happened.[1] It is very true that one says to oneself: "You will have had a lesson for next time." But that is not the case; for fortune always comes upon us in new ways, quite unforeseen by our imagination.

XVIII

On the morning which followed these events, I made the first step in my work upon the great salt-cellar, pressing this and my other pieces forward with incessant industry. My work-people at this time, who were pretty numerous, included both sculptors and goldsmiths. They belonged to several nations, Italian, French, and German; for I took the best I could find, and changed them often, retaining only those who knew their business well. These select craftsmen I worked to the bone with perpetual labour. They wanted to rival me; but I had a better constitution. Consequently, in their inability to bear up against such a continuous strain, they took to eating and drinking copiously; some of the Germans in particular, who were more skilled than their comrades, and wanted to march apace with me, sank under these excesses, and perished.

While I was at work upon the Jupiter, I noticed

[1] *Cellini's philosophy is summed up in the proverb: "A miss is as good as a mile."*

that I had plenty of silver to spare. So I took in hand, without consulting the King, to make a great two-handled vase, about one cubit and a half in height. I also conceived the notion of casting the large model of my Jupiter in bronze. Having up to this date done nothing of the sort, I conferred with certain old men experienced in that art at Paris, and described to them the methods in use with us in Italy. They told me they had never gone that way about the business; but that if I gave them leave to act upon their own principles, they would bring the bronze out as clean and perfect as the clay. I chose to strike an agreement, throwing on them the responsibility, and promising several crowns above the price they bargained for. Thereupon they put the work in progress; but I soon saw that they were going the wrong way about it, and began on my own account a head of Julius Cæsar, bust and armour, much larger than the life, which I modelled from a reduced copy of a splendid antique portrait I had brought with me from Rome. I also undertook another head of the same size, studied from a very handsome girl, whom I kept for my own pleasures. I called this Fontainebleau, after the place selected by the King for his particular delight.

We constructed an admirable little furnace for the casting of the bronze, got all things ready, and baked our moulds; those French masters undertaking the Jupiter, while I looked after my two heads. Then I said: "I do not think you will succeed with your Jupiter, because you have not provided sufficient vents beneath for the air to circulate; therefore

you are but losing your time and trouble." They replied that, if their work proved a failure, they would pay back the money I had given on account, and recoup me for current expenses; but they bade me give good heed to my own proceedings,[1] for the fine heads I meant to cast in my Italian fashion would never succeed.

At this dispute between us there were present the treasurers and other gentlefolk commissioned by the King to superintend my proceedings. Everything which passed by word or act was duly reported to his Majesty. The two old men who had undertaken to cast my Jupiter postponed the experiment, saying they would like to arrange the moulds of my two heads. They argued that, according to my method, no success could be expected, and it was a pity to waste such fine models. When the King was informed of this, he sent word that they should give their minds to learning, and not try to teach their master.

So then they put their own piece into the furnace with much laughter; while I, maintaining a firm carriage, showing neither mirth nor anger (though I felt it), placed my two heads, one on each side of the Jupiter. The metal came all right to melting, and we let it in with joy and gladness; it filled the mould of the Jupiter most admirably, and at the same time my two heads. This furnished them with matter for rejoicing and me with satisfaction; for I was not sorry to have predicted wrongly of their

[1] *Ma che io guardassi bene, che, &c. This is perhaps: but they bade me note well that.*

work, and they made as though they were delighted to have been mistaken about mine. Then, as the custom in France is, they asked to drink, in high good spirits. I was very willing, and ordered a handsome collation for their entertainment. When this was over, they requested me to pay the money due to them and the surplus I had promised. I replied: "You have been laughing over what, I fear, may make you weep. On reflection, it seems to me that too much metal flowed into your mould. Therefore I shall wait until to-morrow before I disburse more money." The poor fellows swallowed my words and chewed the cud of them; then they went home without further argument.

At daybreak they began, quite quietly, to break into the pit of the furnace. They could not uncover their large mould until they had extracted my two heads; these were in excellent condition, and they placed them where they could be well seen. When they came to Jupiter, and had dug but scarcely two cubits, they sent up such a yell, they and their four workmen, that it woke me up. Fancying it was a shout of triumph, I set off running, for my bedroom was at the distance of more than five hundred paces. On reaching the spot, I found them looking like the guardians of Christ's sepulchre in a picture, downcast and terrified. Casting a hasty glance upon my two heads, and seeing they were all right, I tempered my annoyance with the pleasure that sight gave me. Then they began to make excuses, crying: "Our bad luck!" I retorted: "Your luck has been most excellent, but what has been indeed bad is your

deficiency of knowledge; had I only seen you put the soul[1] into your mould, I could have taught you with one word how to cast the figure without fault. This would have brought me great honour and you much profit. I shall be able to make good my reputation; but you will now lose both your honour and your profit. Let then this lesson teach you another time to work, and not to poke fun at your masters."

They prayed me to have pity on them, confessing I was right, but pleading that, unless I helped them, the costs they had to bear and the loss they had sustained would turn them and their families upon the streets a-begging. I answered that if the King's treasurers obliged them to pay according to their contract, I would defray the cost out of my own purse, because I saw that they had honestly and heartily performed their task according to their knowledge. This way of mine in dealing with them raised the good-will of the King's treasurers and other officers toward me to a pitch which cannot be described. The whole affair was written to his Majesty, who being without a paragon for generosity, gave directions that all I ordered in this matter should be done.

XIX

About this time the illustrious soldier Piero Strozzi arrived in France, and reminded the King that he

[1] *I have here translated the Italian anima literally by the English word soul. It is a technical expression, signifying the block, somewhat smaller than the mould, which bronze-founders insert in order to obtain a hollow, and not a solid cast from the mould which gives form to their liquid metal.*

had promised him letters of naturalisation.[1] These were accordingly made out; and at the same time the King said: "Let them be also given to Benvenuto, *mon ami*, and take them immediately to his house, and let him have them without the payment of any fees." Those of the great Strozzi cost him several hundred ducats: mine were brought me by one of the King's chief secretaries, Messer Antonio Massone.[2] This gentleman presented them with many expressions of kindness from his Majesty, saying: "The King makes you a gift of these, in order that you may be encouraged to serve him; they are letters of naturalisation." Then he told me how they had been given to Piero Strozzi at his particular request, and only after a long time of waiting, as a special mark of favour; the King had sent mine of his own accord, and such an act of grace had never been heard of in that realm before. When I heard these words, I thanked his Majesty with heartiness; but I begged the secretary to have the kindness to tell me what letters of naturalisation meant. He was a man accomplished and polite, who spoke Italian excellently. At first my question made him laugh; then he recovered his gravity, and told me in my own language what the papers signified, adding that they conferred one of the highest dignities a foreigner could obtain: "indeed, it is a far greater honour than to be made a nobleman of Venice."

When he left me, he returned and told his Maj-

[1] *Piero was the son of Filippo Strozzi, and the general who lost the battle of Montemurlo, so disastrous to the Florentine exiles, in* 1537.

[2] *Antoine le Maçon, secretary to Margaret of Navarre. He translated the Decameron at her instance into French.*

esty, who laughed awhile, and then said: "Now I wish him to know my object in sending those letters of naturalisation. Go and install him lord of the castle of the Little Nello, where he lives, and which is a part of my demesne. He will know what that means better than he understood about the letters of naturalisation." A messenger brought me the patent, upon which I wanted to give him a gratuity. He refused to accept it, saying that his Majesty had so ordered. These letters of naturalisation, together with the patent for the castle, I brought with me when I returned to Italy; wherever I go and wherever I may end my days, I shall endeavour to preserve them.[1]

XX

I shall now proceed with the narration of my life. I had on hand the following works already mentioned, namely, the silver Jupiter, the golden salt-cellar, the great silver vase, and the two bronze heads. I also began to cast the pedestal for Jupiter, which I wrought very richly in bronze, covered with ornaments, among which was a bas-relief, representing the rape of Ganymede, and on the other side Leda and the Swan. On casting this piece it came out admirably. I also made another pedestal of the same sort for the statue of Juno, intending to begin that too, if the King gave me silver for the purpose. By working briskly I had put together the silver Jupiter and the golden salt-cellar; the vase

[1] *The letter of naturalisation exists. See Bianchi, p. 583. For the grant of the castle, see ibid., p. 585.*

was far advanced; the two bronze heads were finished. I had also made several little things for the Cardinal of Ferrara, and a small silver vase of rich workmanship, which I meant to present to Madame d'Etampes. Several Italian noblemen, to wit, Signor Piero Strozzi, the Count of Anguillara, the Count of Pitigliano, the Count of Mirandola, and many others, gave me employment also.[1]

For my great King, as I have said, I had been working strenuously, and the third day after he returned to Paris, he came to my house, attended by a crowd of his chief nobles. He marvelled to find how many pieces I had advanced, and with what excellent results. His mistress, Madame d'Etampes, being with him, they began to talk of Fontainebleau. She told his Majesty he ought to commission me to execute something beautiful for the decoration of his favourite residence. He answered on the instant: "You say well, and here upon the spot I will make up my mind what I mean him to do." Then he turned to me, and asked me what I thought would be appropriate for that beautiful fountain.[2] I suggested several ideas, and his Majesty expressed his own opinion. Afterwards he said that he was going to spend fifteen or twenty days at San Germano del Aia,[3] a place twelve leagues distant from Paris; during his absence he wished me to make a model for

[1] *Anguillara and Pitigliano were fiefs of two separate branches of the Orsini family. The house of Pico lost their lordship of Mirandola in* 1536, *when Galeotto Pico took refuge with his sons in France. His descendants renewed their hold upon the fief, which was erected into a duchy in* 1619.

[2] *Per quella bella fonte. Here, and below, Cellini mixes up Fontainebleau and the spring which gave its name to the place.*

[3] *S. Germain-en-Laye is not so far from Paris as Cellini thought.*

NYMPH OF FONTAINEBLEAU BY CELLINI
(LOUVRE)

that fair fountain of his in the richest style I could invent, seeing he delighted in that residence more than in anything else in his whole realm. Accordingly he commanded and besought me to do my utmost to produce something really beautiful; and I promised that I would do so.

When the King saw so many finished things before him, he exclaimed to Madame d'Etampes: "I never had an artist who pleased me more, nor one who deserved better to be well rewarded; we must contrive to keep him with us. He spends freely, is a boon companion, and works hard; we must therefore take good thought for him. Only think, madam, all the times that he has come to me or that I have come to him, he has never once asked for anything; one can see that his heart is entirely devoted to his work. We ought to make a point of doing something for him quickly, else we run a risk of losing him." Madame d'Etampes answered: "I will be sure to remind you." Then they departed, and in addition to the things I had begun, I now took the model of the fountain in hand, at which I worked assiduously.

XXI

At the end of a month and a half the King returned to Paris; and I, who had been working day and night, went to present myself before him, taking my model, so well blocked out that my intention could be clearly understood. Just about that time, the devilries of war between the Emperor and King had been stirred up again, so that I found him much

harassed by anxieties.[1] I spoke, however, with the Cardinal of Ferrara, saying I had brought some models which his Majesty had ordered, and begging him, if he found an opportunity, to put in a word whereby I might be able to exhibit them; the King, I thought, would take much pleasure in their sight. This the Cardinal did; and no sooner had he spoken of the models, than the King came to the place where I had set them up. The first of these was intended for the door of the palace at Fontainebleau. I had been obliged to make some alterations in the architecture of this door, which was wide and low, in their vicious French style. The opening was very nearly square, and above it was a hemicycle, flattened like the handle of a basket; here the King wanted a figure placed to represent the genius of Fontainebleau. I corrected the proportions of the doorway, and placed above it an exact half circle; at the sides I introduced projections, with socles and cornices properly corresponding: then, instead of the columns demanded by this disposition of parts, I fashioned two satyrs, one upon each side. The first of these was in somewhat more than half-relief, lifting one hand to support the cornice, and holding a thick club in the other; his face was fiery and menacing, instilling fear into the beholders. The other had the same posture of support; but I varied his features and some other details; in his hand, for instance, he held a lash with three balls attached to chains. Though I called them satyrs, they showed nothing of the satyr except little horns and a goat-

[1] *Cellini refers to the renewal of hostilities in May* 1542.

ish head; all the rest of their form was human. In the lunette above I placed a female figure lying in an attitude of noble grace; she rested her left arm on a stag's neck, this animal being one of the King's emblems. On one side I worked little fawns in half-relief, with some wild boars and other game in lower relief; on the other side were hounds and divers dogs of the chase of several species, such as may be seen in that fair forest where the fountain springs. The whole of this composition was enclosed in an oblong, each angle of which contained a Victory in bas-relief, holding torches after the manner of the ancients. Above the oblong was a salamander, the King's particular device, with many other ornaments appropriate to the Ionic architecture of the whole design.

XXII

When the King had seen this model, it restored him to cheerfulness, and distracted his mind from the fatiguing debates he had been holding during the past two hours. Seeing him cheerful as I wished, I uncovered the other model, which he was far from expecting, since he not unreasonably judged that the first had work in it enough. This one was a little higher than two cubits; it figured a fountain shaped in a perfect square, with handsome steps all round, intersecting each other in a way which was unknown in France, and is indeed very uncommon in Italy. In the middle of the fountain I set a pedestal, projecting somewhat above the margin of the basin, and upon this a nude male figure, of the right proportion

to the whole design, and of a very graceful form. In his right hand he raised a broken lance on high; his left hand rested on a scimitar; he was poised upon the left foot, the right being supported by a helmet of the richest imaginable workmanship. At each of the four angles of the fountain a figure was sitting, raised above the level of the base, and accompanied by many beautiful and appropriate emblems.

The King began by asking me what I meant to represent by the fine fancy I had embodied in this design, saying that he had understood the door without explanation, but that he could not take the conception of my fountain, although it seemed to him most beautiful; at the same time, he knew well that I was not like those foolish folk who turn out something with a kind of grace, but put no intention into their performances. I then addressed myself to the task of exposition; for having succeeded in pleasing him with my work, I wanted him to be no less pleased with my discourse. "Let me inform your sacred Majesty," I thus began, "that the whole of this model is so exactly made to scale, that, if it should come to being executed in the large, none of its grace and lightness will be sacrificed. The figure in the middle is meant to stand fifty-four feet above the level of the ground." At this announcement the King made a sign of surprise. "It is, moreover, intended to represent the god Mars. The other figures embody those arts and sciences in which your Majesty takes pleasure, and which you so generously patronise. This one, upon the right hand, is

designed for Learning; you will observe that the accompanying emblems indicate Philosophy, and her attendant branches of knowledge. By the next I wished to personify the whole Art of Design, including Sculpture, Painting, and Architecture. The third is Music, which cannot be omitted from the sphere of intellectual culture. That other, with so gracious and benign a mien, stands for Generosity, lacking which the mental gifts bestowed on us by God will not be brought to view. I have attempted to portray your Majesty, your very self, in the great central statue; for you are truly a god Mars, the only brave upon this globe, and all your bravery you use with justice and with piety in the defence of your own glory." Scarcely had he allowed me to finish this oration, when he broke forth with a strong voice: "Verily I have found a man here after my own heart." Then he called the treasurers who were appointed for my supplies, and told them to disburse whatever I required, let the cost be what it might. Next, he laid his hand upon my shoulder, saying: "*Mon ami* (which is the same as *my friend*), I know not whether the pleasure be greater for the prince who finds a man after his own heart, or for the artist who finds a prince willing to furnish him with means for carrying out his great ideas." I answered that, if I was really the man his Majesty described, my good fortune was by far the greater. He answered laughingly: "Let us agree, then, that our luck is equal!" Then I departed in the highest spirits, and went back to my work.

XXIII

My ill-luck willed that I was not wide-awake enough to play the like comedy with Madame d'Etampes. That evening, when she heard the whole course of events from the King's own lips, it bred such poisonous fury in her breast that she exclaimed with anger: "If Benvenuto had shown me those fine things of his, he would have given me some reason to be mindful of him at the proper moment." The King sought to excuse me, but he made no impression on her temper. Being informed of what had passed, I waited fifteen days, during which they made a tour through Normandy, visiting Rouen and Dieppe; then, when they returned to S. Germain-en-Laye, I took the handsome little vase which I had made at the request of Madame d'Etampes, hoping, if I gave it her, to recover the favour I had lost. With this in my hand, then, I announced my presence to her nurse, and showed the gift which I had brought her mistress; the woman received me with demonstrations of good-will, and said that she would speak a word to Madame, who was still engaged upon her toilette; I should be admitted on the instant, when she had discharged her embassy. The nurse made her report in full to Madame, who retorted scornfully: "Tell him to wait." On hearing this, I clothed myself with patience, which of all things I find the most difficult. Nevertheless, I kept myself under control until the hour for dinner was past. Then, seeing that time dragged on, and being maddened by hunger, I could no longer hold out,

but flung off, sending her most devoutly to the devil.

I next betook myself to the Cardinal of Lorraine, and made him a present of the vase, only petitioning his Eminence to maintain me in the King's good graces. He said there was no need for this; and if there were need he would gladly speak for me. Then he called his treasurer, and whispered a few words in his ear. The treasurer waited till I took my leave of the Cardinal; after which he said to me: "Benvenuto, come with me, and I will give you a glass of good wine to drink." I answered, not understanding what he meant: "For Heaven's sake, Mr. Treasurer, let me have but one glass of wine and a mouthful of bread; for I am really fainting for want of food. I have fasted since early this morning up to the present moment, at the door of Madame d'Etampes; I went to give her that fine piece of silver-gilt plate, and took pains that she would be informed of my intention; but she, with the mere petty will to vex me, bade me wait; now I am famished, and feel my forces failing; and, as God willed it, I have bestowed my gift and labour upon one who is far more worthy of them. I only crave of you something to drink; for being rather too bilious by nature, fast upsets me so that I run the risk now of falling from exhaustion to the earth." While I was pumping out these words with difficulty, they brought some admirable wine and other delicacies for a hearty meal. I refreshed myself, and having recovered my vital spirits, found that my exasperation had departed from me.

The good treasurer handed me a hundred crowns in gold. I sturdily refused to accept them. He reported this to the Cardinal, who swore at him, and told him to make me take the money by force, and not to show himself again till he had done so. The treasurer returned, much irritated, saying he had never been so scolded before by the Cardinal; but when he pressed the crowns upon me, I still offered some resistance. Then, quite angry, he said he would use force to make me take them. So I accepted the money. When I wanted to thank the Cardinal in person, he sent word by one of his secretaries that he would gladly do me a service whenever the occasion offered. I returned the same evening to Paris. The King heard the whole history, and Madame d'Etampes was well laughed at in their company. This increased her animosity against me, and led to an attack upon my life, of which I shall speak in the proper time and place.

XXIV

Far back in my autobiography I ought to have recorded the friendship which I won with the most cultivated, the most affectionate, and the most companionable man of worth I ever knew in this world. He was Messer Guido Guidi, an able physician and doctor of medicine, and a nobleman of Florence.[1] The infinite troubles brought upon me by my evil fortune caused me to omit the mention of him at an

[1] *Son of Giuliano Guidi and Costanza, a daughter of Domenico Ghirlandajo. François I. sent for him some time before* 1542, *appointed him his own physician, and professor of medicine in the Royal College. He returned to Florence in* 1548.

earlier date; and though my remembrance may be but a trifle, I deemed it sufficient to keep him always in my heart. Yet, finding that the drama of my life requires his presence, I shall introduce him here at the moment of my greatest trials, in order that, as he was then my comfort and support, I may now recall to memory the good he did me.[1]

Well, then, Messer Guido came to Paris; and not long after making his acquaintance, I took him to my castle, and there assigned him his own suite of apartments. We enjoyed our lives together in that place for several years. The Bishop of Pavia, that is to say, Monsignore de' Rossi, brother of the Count of San Secondo, also arrived.[2] This gentleman I removed from his hotel, and took him to my castle, assigning him in like manner his own suite of apartments, where he sojourned many months with serving-men and horses. On another occasion I lodged Messer Luigi Alamanni and his sons for some months. It was indeed God's grace to me that I should thus, in my poor station, be able to render services to men of great position and acquirements.

But to return to Messer Guido. We enjoyed our mutual friendship during all the years I stayed in Paris, and often did we exult together on being able to advance in art and knowledge at the cost of that so great and admirable prince, our patron, each in his own branch of industry. I can indeed, and with

[1] *Qui mi faccia memoria di quel bene. This is obscure. Quel bene may mean the happiness of his friendship.*

[2] *We have already met with him in the Castle of S. Angelo. His brother, the Count, was general in the French army. This brought the Bishop to Paris, whence he returned to Italy in* 1545.

good conscience, affirm that all I am, whatever of good and beautiful I have produced, all this must be ascribed to that extraordinary monarch. So, then, I will resume the thread of my discourse concerning him and the great things I wrought for him.

XXV

I had a tennis-court in my castle, from which I drew considerable profit. The building also contained some little dwellings inhabited by different sorts of men, among whom was a printer of books of much excellence in his own trade. Nearly the whole of his premises lay inside the castle, and he was the man who printed Messer Guido's first fine book on medicine.[1] Wanting to make use of his lodging, I turned him out, but not without some trouble. There was also a manufacturer of saltpetre; and when I wished to assign his apartments to some of my German workmen, the fellow refused to leave the place. I asked him over and over again in gentle terms to give me up my rooms, because I wanted to employ them for my work-people in the service of the King. The more moderately I spoke, the more arrogantly did the brute reply; till at last I gave him three days' notice to quit. He laughed me in the face, and said that he would begin to think of it at the end of three years. I had not then learned that he was under the protection of Madame d'Etampes; but had it not been that the terms on which I stood toward that lady

[1] *Chirurgia e Græco in Latinum Conversa, Vido Vidio Florentino interprete, &c. Excudebat Petrus Galterius Luteciæ Parisiorum, prid. Cal. Mai.* 1544. *So this printer was Pierre Sauthier.*

made me a little more circumspect than I was wont to be, I should have ousted him at once; now, however, I thought it best to keep my temper for three days. When the term was over, I said nothing, but took Germans, Italians, and Frenchmen, bearing arms, and many hand-labourers whom I had in my employ, and in a short while gutted all his house and flung his property outside my castle. I resorted to these somewhat rigorous measures because he had told me that no Italian whom he knew of had the power or spirit to remove one ring of iron from its place in his house. Well, after the deed was done, he came to find me, and I said to him: "I am the least of all Italians in Italy, and yet I have done nothing to you in comparison with what I have the heart to do, and will do if you utter a single further word," adding other terms of menace and abuse. The man, dumbfounded and affrighted, got his furniture together as well as he was able; then he ran off to Madame d'Etampes, and painted a picture of me like the very fiend. She being my great enemy, painted my portrait still blacker to the King, with all her greater eloquence and all her greater weight of influence. As I was afterwards informed, his Majesty twice showed signs of irritation and was minded to use me roughly: but Henry the Dauphin, his son, now King of France, who had received some affronts from that imperious woman, together with the Queen of Navarre, sister to King Francis, espoused my cause so cleverly that he passed the matter over with a laugh. So with God's assistance I escaped from a great danger.

XXVI

I had to deal in like manner with another fellow, but I did not ruin his house; I only threw all his furniture out of doors. This time Madame d'Etampes had the insolence to tell the King: "I believe that devil will sack Paris one of these days." The King answered with some anger that I was only quite right to defend myself from the low rabble who put obstacles in the way of my serving him.

The rage of this vindictive woman kept continually on the increase. She sent for a painter who was established at Fontainebleau, where the King resided nearly all his time. The painter was an Italian and a Bolognese, known then as Il Bologna; his right name, however, was Francesco Primaticcio.[1] Madame d'Etampes advised him to beg that commission for the fountain which his Majesty had given me, adding that she would support him with all her ability; and upon this they agreed. Bologna was in an ecstasy of happiness, and thought himself sure of the affair, although such things were not in his line of art. He was, however, an excellent master of design, and had collected round him a troop of workpeople formed in the school of Rosso, our Florentine painter, who was undoubtedly an artist of extraordinary merit; his own best qualities indeed were derived from the admirable manner of Rosso, who by this time had died.

[1] *Primaticcio, together with Rosso, introduced Italian painting into France. Vasari says he came to Paris in* 1541. *He died in* 1570. *He was, like many other of the Lombard artists, an excellent master of stucco.*

FRANCESCO PRIMATICCIO
(BY HIMSELF)

These ingenious arguments, and the weighty influence of Madame d'Etampes, prevailed with the King; for they kept hammering at him night and day, Madame at one time, and Bologna at another. What worked most upon his mind was that both of them combined to speak as follows: "How is it possible, sacred Majesty, that Benvenuto should accomplish the twelve silver statues which you want? He has not finished one of them yet. If you employ him on so great an undertaking, you will, of necessity, deprive yourself of those other things on which your heart is set. A hundred of the ablest craftsmen could not complete so many great works as this one able man has taken in hand to do. One can see clearly that he has a passion for labour; but this ardent temper will be the cause of your Majesty's losing both him and his masterpieces at the same moment." By insinuating these and other suggestions of the same sort at a favourable opportunity, the King consented to their petition; and yet Bologna had at this time produced neither designs nor models for the fountain.

XXVII

It happened that just at this period an action was brought against me in Paris by the second lodger I had ousted from my castle, who pretended that on that occasion I had stolen a large quantity of his effects. This lawsuit tormented me beyond measure, and took up so much of my time that I often thought of decamping in despair from the country. Now the French are in the habit of making much capital out of any action they commence against a foreigner,

or against such persons as they notice to be indolent in litigation. No sooner do they observe that they are getting some advantage in the suit, than they find the means to sell it; some have even been known to give a lawsuit in dowry with their daughters to men who make a business out of such transactions. They have another ugly custom, which is that the Normans, nearly all of them, traffic in false evidence; so that the men who buy up lawsuits, engage at once the services of four or six of these false witnesses, according to their need; their adversary, if he neglect to produce as many on the other side, being perhaps unacquainted with the custom, is certain to have the verdict given against him.

All this happened in my case, and thinking it a most disgraceful breach of justice, I made my appearance in the great hall of Paris, to defend my right. There I saw a judge, lieutenant for the King in civil causes, enthroned upon a high tribunal. He was tall, stout, and fat, and of an extremely severe countenance. All round him on each side stood a crowd of solicitors and advocates, ranged upon the right hand and the left. Others were coming, one by one, to explain their several causes to the judge. From time to time, too, I noticed that the attorneys at the side of the tribunal talked all at once: and much admiration was roused in me by that extraordinary man, the very image of Pluto, who listened with marked attention first to one and then to the other, answering each with learning and sagacity. I have always delighted in watching and experiencing every kind of skill; so I would not have lost

this spectacle for much. It happened that the hall being very large, and filled with a multitude of folk, they were strict in excluding every one who had no business there, and kept the door shut with a guard to hold it. Sometimes the guardian, in his effort to prevent the entrance of some improper person, interrupted the judge by the great noise he made, and the judge in anger turned to chide him. This happened frequently, so that my attention was directed to the fact. On one occasion, when two gentlemen were pushing their way in as spectators, and the porter was opposing them with violence, the judge raised his voice, and spoke the following words precisely as I heard them: "Keep peace, Satan, begone, and hold your tongue." These words in the French tongue sound as follows: *Phe phe, Satan, phe phe, alé, phe!*[1] Now I had learned the French tongue well; and on hearing this sentence, the meaning of that phrase used by Dante came into my memory, when he and his master Virgil entered the doors of Hell. Dante and the painter Giotto were together in France, and particularly in the city of Paris, where, owing to the circumstances I have just described, the hall of justice may be truly called a hell. Dante then, who also understood French well, made use of the phrase in question, and it has struck me as singular that this interpretation has never yet been

[1] *Paix, paix, Satan, allez, paix. The line in Dante to which Cellini alludes is the first of the seventh canto of the Inferno. His suggestion is both curious and ingenious; but we have no reason to think that French judges used the same imprecations, when interrupted, in the thirteenth as they did in the sixteenth century, or that what Cellini heard on this occasion was more than an accidental similarity of sounds, striking his quick ear and awakening his lively memory.*

put upon the passage; indeed, it confirms my opinion that the commentators make him say things which never came into his head.

XXVIII

Well, then, to return to my affairs. When certain decisions of the court were sent me by those lawyers, and I perceived that my cause had been unjustly lost, I had recourse for my defence to a great dagger which I carried; for I have always taken pleasure in keeping fine weapons. The first man I attacked was the plaintiff who had sued me; and one evening I wounded him in the legs and arms so severely, taking care, however, not to kill him, that I deprived him of the use of both his legs. Then I sought out the other fellow who had bought the suit, and used him also in such wise that he dropped it.

Returning thanks to God for this and every other dispensation, and hoping to be left awhile without worries, I bade the young men of my household, especially the Italians, for God's sake to attend each diligently to the work I set him, and to help me till such time as I could finish the things I had in hand. I thought they might soon be completed, and then I meant to return to Italy, being no longer able to put up with the rogueries of those Frenchmen; the good King too, if he once grew angry, might bring me into mischief for many of my acts in self-defence. I will describe who these Italians were; the first, and the one I liked best, was Ascanio, from Tagliacozzo in the kingdom of Naples; the second was Pagolo, a Roman of such humble origin that he did not know

his own father. These were the two men who had been with me in Rome, and whom I had taken with me on the journey. Another Roman had also come on purpose to enter my service; he too bore the name of Pagolo, and was the son of a poor nobleman of the family of the Macaroni; he had small acquirements in our art, but was an excellent and courageous swordsman. I had another from Ferrara called Bartolommeo Chioccia. There was also another from Florence named Pagolo Micceri; his brother, nicknamed "Il Gatta," was a clever clerk, but had spent too much money in managing the property of Tommaso Guadagni, a very wealthy merchant. This Gatta put in order for me the books in which I wrote the accounts of his most Christian Majesty and my other employers. Now Pagolo Micceri, having learned how to keep them from his brother, went on doing this work for me in return for a liberal salary. He appeared, so far as I could judge, to be a very honest lad, for I noticed him to be devout, and when I heard him sometimes muttering psalms, and sometimes telling his beads, I reckoned much upon his feigned virtue.

Accordingly I called the fellow apart and said to him, "Pagolo, my dearest brother, you know what a good place you have with me, and how you had formerly nothing to depend on; besides, you are a Florentine. I have also the greater confidence in you because I observe that you are pious and religious, which is a thing that pleases me. I beg you therefore to assist me, for I cannot put the same trust in any of your companions: so then I shall ask you to keep

watch over two matters of the highest importance, which might prove a source of much annoyance to me. In the first place, I want you to guard my property from being stolen, and not touch it yourself. In the next place, you know that poor young girl, Caterina; I keep her principally for my art's sake, since I cannot do without a model; but being a man also, I have used her for my pleasures, and it is possible that she may bear me a child. Now I do not want to maintain another man's bastards, nor will I sit down under such an insult. If any one in this house had the audacity to attempt anything of the sort, and I were to become aware of it, I verily believe that I should kill both her and him. Accordingly, dear brother, I entreat you to be my helper; should you notice anything, tell it me at once; for I am sure to send her and her mother and her fellow to the gallows. Be you the first upon your watch against falling into this snare." The rascal made a sign of the cross from his head to his feet and cried out: "O blessed Jesus! God preserve me from ever thinking of such a thing! In the first place, I am not given to those evil ways; in the next place, do you imagine I am ignorant of your great benefits toward me?" When I heard these words, which he uttered with all appearance of simplicity and affection for me, I believed that matters stood precisely as he asserted.

XXIX

Two days after this conversation, M. Mattio del Nazaro took the occasion of some feast-day to invite me and my work-people to an entertainment in a gar-

den.[1] He was an Italian in the King's service, and practised the same art as we did with remarkable ability. I got myself in readiness, and told Pagolo that he might go abroad too and amuse himself with us; the annoyances arising from that lawsuit being, as I judged, now settled down. The young man replied in these words: "Upon my word, it would be a great mistake to leave the house so unprotected. Only look how much of gold, silver, and jewels you have here. Living as we do in a city of thieves, we ought to be upon our guard by day and night. I will spend the time in religious exercises, while I keep watch over the premises. Go then with mind at rest to take your pleasure and divert your spirits. Some other day another man will take my place as guardian here."

Thinking that I could go off with a quiet mind, I took Pagolo, Ascanio, and Chioccia to the garden, where we spent a large portion of the day agreeably. Toward the middle of the afternoon, however, when it began to draw toward sundown, a suspicion came into my head, and I recollected the words which that traitor had spoken with his feigned simplicity. So I mounted my horse, and with two servants to attend me, returned to the castle, where I all but caught Pagolo and that little wretch Caterina *in flagrante*. No sooner had I reached the place, than that French bawd, her mother, screamed out: "Pagolo! Caterina! here is the master!" When I saw the pair advancing, overcome with fright, their clothes in disorder, not knowing what they said,

[1] *Matteo del Nassaro, a native of Verona, was employed in France as engraver, die-caster, and musician.*

nor, like people in a trance, where they were going, it was only too easy to guess what they had been about. The sight drowned reason in rage, and I drew my sword, resolved to kill them both. The man took to his heels; the girl flung herself upon her knees, and shrieked to Heaven for mercy. In my first fury I wanted to strike at the male; but before I had the time to catch him up, second thoughts arose which made me think it would be best for me to drive them both away together. I had so many acts of violence upon my hands, that if I killed him I could hardly hope to save my life. I said then to Pagolo: "Had I seen with my own eyes, scoundrel, what your behaviour and appearance force me to believe, I should have run you with this sword here ten times through the guts. Get out of my sight; and if you say a Paternoster, let it be San Giuliano's."[1] Then I drove the whole lot forth, mother and daughter, lamming into them with fist and foot. They made their minds up to have the law of me, and consulted a Norman advocate, who advised them to declare that I had used the girl after the Italian fashion; what this meant I need hardly explain.[2] The man argued: "At the very least, when this Italian hears what you are after, he will pay down several hundred ducats, knowing how great the danger is, and how heavily that offence is punished in France." Upon this they were agreed. The accusation was brought against me, and I received a summons from the court.

[1] *See Boccaccio, Decam., Gior. ii. Nov. ii.*

[2] *Qual modo s'intendeva contro natura, cioè in soddomia.*

XXX

The more I sought for rest, the more I was annoyed with all sorts of embarrassments. Being thus daily exposed to divers persecutions, I pondered which of two courses I ought to take; whether to decamp and leave France to the devil, or else to fight this battle through as I had done the rest, and see to what end God had made me. For a long while I kept anxiously revolving the matter. At last I resolved to make off, dreading to tempt my evil fortune, lest this should bring me to the gallows. My dispositions were all fixed; I had made arrangements for putting away the property I could not carry, and for charging the lighter articles, to the best of my ability, upon myself and servants; yet it was with great and heavy reluctance that I looked forward to such a departure.

I had shut myself up alone in a little study. My young men were advising me to fly; but I told them that it would be well for me to meditate this step in solitude, although I very much inclined to their opinion. Indeed, I reasoned that if I could escape imprisonment and let the storm pass over, I should be able to explain matters to the King by letter, setting forth the trap which had been laid to ruin me by the malice of my enemies. And as I have said above, my mind was made up to this point; when, just as I rose to act on the decision, some power took me by the shoulder and turned me round, and I heard a voice which cried with vehemence: "Benvenuto, do as thou art wont, and fear not!" Then, on the instant, I changed the whole course of my

plans, and said to my Italians: "Take your good arms and come with me; obey me to the letter; have no other thought, for I am now determined to put in my appearance. If I were to leave Paris, you would vanish the next day in smoke; so do as I command, and follow me." They all began together with one heart and voice to say: "Since we are here, and draw our livelihood from him, it is our duty to go with him and bear him out so long as we have life to execute what he proposes. He has hit the mark better than we did in this matter; for on the instant when he leaves the place, his enemies will send us to the devil. Let us keep well in mind what great works we have begun here, and what vast importance they possess; we should not know how to finish them without him, and his enemies would say that he had taken flight because he shrank before such undertakings." Many other things bearing weightily upon the subject were said among them. But it was the young Roman, Macaroni, who first put heart into the company; and he also raised recruits from the Germans and the Frenchmen, who felt well disposed toward me.

We were ten men, all counted. I set out, firmly resolved not to let myself be taken and imprisoned alive. When we appeared before the judges for criminal affairs, I found Caterina and her mother waiting; and on the moment of my arrival, the two women were laughing with their advocate. I pushed my way in, and called boldly for the judge, who was seated, blown out big and fat, upon a tribunal high above the rest. On catching sight of me, he threatened with his head,

and spoke in a subdued voice: "Although your name is Benvenuto, this time you are an ill-comer." I understood his speech, and called out the second time: "Despatch my business quickly. Tell me what I have come to do here." Then the judge turned to Caterina, and said: "Caterina, relate all that happened between you and Benvenuto." She answered that I had used her after the Italian fashion. The judge turned to me and said: "You hear what Caterina deposes, Benvenuto." I replied: "If I have consorted with her after the Italian fashion, I have only done the same as you folk of other nations do." He demurred: "She means that you improperly abused her." I retorted that, so far from being the Italian fashion, it must be some French habit, seeing she knew all about it, while I was ignorant; and I commanded her to explain precisely how I had consorted with her. Then the impudent baggage entered into plain and circumstantial details regarding all the filth she lyingly accused me of. I made her repeat her deposition three times in succession. When she had finished, I cried out with a loud voice: "Lord judge, lieutenant of the Most Christian King, I call on you for justice. Well I know that by the laws of his Most Christian Majesty both agent and patient in this kind of crime are punished with the stake. The woman confesses her guilt; I admit nothing whatsoever of the sort with regard to her; her go-between of a mother is here, who deserves to be burned for either one or the other offence. Therefore I appeal to you for justice." These words I repeated over and over again at the top of my voice, continually calling out: "To the stake with her and her mother!" I also

threatened the judge that, if he did not send her to prison there before me, I would go to the King at once, and tell him how his lieutenant in criminal affairs of justice had wronged me. When they heard what a tumult I was making, my adversaries lowered their voices, but I lifted mine the more. The little hussy and her mother fell to weeping, while I shouted to the judge: "Fire, fire! to the stake with them!" The coward on the bench, finding that the matter was not going as he intended, began to use soft words and excuse the weakness of the female sex. Thereupon I felt that I had won the victory in a nasty encounter; and, muttering threats between my teeth, I took myself off, not without great inward satisfaction. Indeed, I would gladly have paid five hundred crowns down to have avoided that appearance in court. However, after escaping from the tempest, I thanked God with all my heart, and returned in gladness with my young men to the castle.

XXXI

When adverse fortune, or, if we prefer to call it, our malignant planet, undertakes to persecute a man, it never lacks new ways of injuring him. So now, when I thought I had emerged from this tempestuous sea of troubles, and hoped my evil star would leave me quiet for a moment, it began to set two schemes in motion against me before I had recovered my breath from that great struggle. Within three days two things happened, each of which brought my life into extreme hazard. One of these occurred in this way: I went to Fontainebleau to consult with the King; for

he had written me a letter saying he wanted me to stamp the coins of his whole realm, and enclosing some little drawings to explain his wishes in the matter; at the same time he left me free to execute them as I liked; upon which I made new designs according to my own conception, and according to the ideal of art. When I reached Fontainebleau, one of the treasurers commissioned by the King to defray my expenses (he was called Monsignor della Fa[1]) addressed me in these words: "Benvenuto, the painter Bologna has obtained commission from the King to execute your great Colossus, and all the orders previously given as on your behalf have been transferred to him.[2] We are all indignant; and it seems to us that that countryman of yours has acted towards you in a most unwarrantable manner. The work was assigned you on the strength of your models and studies. He is robbing you of it, only through the favour of Madame d'Etampes; and though several months have passed since he received the order, he has not yet made any sign of commencing it." I answered in surprise: "How is it possible that I should have heard nothing at all about this?" He then informed me that the man had kept it very dark, and had obtained the King's commission with great difficulty, since his Majesty at first would not concede it; only the importunity of Madame d'Etampes secured this favour for him.

When I felt how greatly and how wrongfully I

[1] *His name in full was Jacques de la Fa. He and his son Pierre after him held the office of trésorier de l'épargne. See Plon, p. 63.*

[2] *By Colossus, Cellini means the fountain with the great statue of Mars.*

had been betrayed, and saw a work which I had gained with my great toil thus stolen from me, I made my mind up for a serious stroke of business, and marched off with my good sword at my side to find Bologna.[1] He was in his room, engaged in studies; after telling the servant to introduce me, he greeted me with some of his Lombard compliments, and asked what good business had brought me hither. I replied: "A most excellent business, and one of great importance." He then sent for wine, and said: "Before we begin to talk, we must drink together, for such is the French custom." I answered: "Messer Francesco, you must know that the conversation we have to engage in does not call for drinking at the commencement; after it is over, perhaps we shall be glad to take a glass." Then I opened the matter in this way: "All men who wish to pass for persons of worth allow it to be seen that they are so by their actions; if they do the contrary, they lose the name of honest men. I am aware that you knew the King had commissioned me with that great Colossus; it had been talked of these eighteen months past; yet neither you nor anybody else came forward to speak a word about it. By my great labours I made myself known to his Majesty, who approved of my models and gave the work into my hands. During many months I have heard nothing to the contrary; only this morning I was informed that you have got hold of it, and have filched it from me. I earned it by the talents I displayed, and you are robbing me of it merely by your idle talking."

[1] *i.e.*, *Primaticcio.*

XXXII

To this speech Bologna answered: "O Benvenuto! all men try to push their affairs in every way they can. If this is the King's will, what have you to say against it? You would only throw away your time, because I have it now, and it is mine. Now tell me what you choose, and I will listen to you." I replied: "I should like you to know, Messer Francesco, that I could say much which would prove irrefragably, and make you admit, that such ways of acting as you have described and used are not in vogue among rational animals. I will, however, come quickly to the point at issue; give close attention to my meaning, because the affair is serious." He made as though he would rise from the chair on which he was sitting, since he saw my colour heightened and my features greatly discomposed. I told him that the time had not yet come for moving; he had better sit and listen to me. Then I recommenced: "Messer Francesco, you know that I first received the work, and that the time has long gone by during which my right could be reasonably disputed by any one. Now I tell you that I shall be satisfied if you will make a model, while I make another in addition to the one I have already shown. Then we will take them without any clamour to our great King; and whosoever in this way shall have gained the credit of the best design will justly have deserved the commission. If it falls to you, I will dismiss from my mind the memory of the great injury you have done me, and will bless your hands, as being worthier than mine of so glorious a perform-

ance. Let us abide by this agreement, and we shall be friends; otherwise we must be enemies; and God, who always helps the right, and I, who know how to assert it, will show you to what extent you have done wrong." Messer Francesco answered: "The work is mine, and since it has been given me, I do not choose to put what is my own to hazard." To this I retorted: "Messer Francesco, if you will not take the right course which is just and reasonable, I will show you another which shall be like your own, that is to say, ugly and disagreeable. I tell you plainly that if I ever hear that you have spoken one single word about this work of mine, I will kill you like a dog. We are neither in Rome, nor in Bologna, nor in Florence; here one lives in quite a different fashion; if then it comes to my ears that you talk about this to the King or anybody else, I vow that I will kill you. Reflect upon the way you mean to take, whether that for good which I formerly described, or this latter bad one I have just now set before you."

The man did not know what to say or do, and I was inclined to cut the matter short upon the spot rather than to postpone action. Bologna found no other words than these to utter: "If I act like a man of honesty, I shall stand in no fear." I replied: "You have spoken well, but if you act otherwise, you will have to fear, because the affair is serious." Upon this I left him, and betook myself to the King. With his Majesty I disputed some time about the fashion of his coinage, a point upon which we were not of the same opinion; his council, who were present, kept persuading him that the moneys ought to be struck

in the French style, as they had hitherto always been done. I urged in reply that his Majesty had sent for me from Italy in order that I might execute good work; if he now wanted me to do the contrary, I could not bring myself to submit. So the matter was postponed till another occasion, and I set off again at once for Paris.

XXXIII

I had but just dismounted from my horse, when one of those excellent people who rejoice in mischief-making came to tell me that Pagolo Micceri had taken a house for the little hussy Caterina and her mother, and that he was always going there, and whenever he mentioned me, used words of scorn to this effect: "Benvenuto set the fox to watch the grapes,[1] and thought I would not eat them! Now he is satisfied with going about and talking big, and thinks I am afraid of him. But I have girt this sword and dagger to my side in order to show him that my steel can cut as well as his, and that I too am a Florentine, of the Micceri, a far better family than his Cellini." The scoundrel who reported this poisonous gossip spoke it with such good effect that I felt a fever in the instant swoop upon me; and when I say fever, I mean fever, and no mere metaphor. The insane passion which took possession of me might have been my death, had I not resolved to give it vent as the occasion offered. I ordered the Ferrarese workman, Chioccia, to come with me, and made a servant follow with my horse. When we reached the

[1] *Aveva dato a guardia la lattuga ai paperi.*

house where that worthless villain was, I found the door ajar, and entered. I noticed that he carried sword and dagger, and was sitting on a big chest with his arm round Caterina's neck; at the moment of my arrival, I could hear that he and her mother were talking about me. Pushing the door open, I drew my sword, and set the point of it at his throat, not giving him the time to think whether he too carried steel. At the same instant I cried out: "Vile coward! recommend your soul to God, for you are a dead man." Without budging from his seat, he called three times: "Mother, mother, help me!" Though I had come there fully determined to take his life, half my fury ebbed away when I heard this idiotic exclamation. I ought to add that I had told Chioccia not to let the girl or her mother leave the house, since I meant to deal with those trollops after I had disposed of their bully. So I went on holding my sword at his throat, and now and then just pricked him with the point, pouring out a torrent of terrific threats at the same time. But when I found he did not stir a finger in his own defence, I began to wonder what I should do next; my menacing attitude could not be kept up forever; so at last it came into my head to make them marry, and complete my vengeance at a later period. Accordingly, I formed my resolution, and began: "Take that ring, coward, from your finger, and marry her, that I may get satisfaction from you afterwards according to your deserts." He replied at once: "If only you do not kill me, I will do whatever you command." "Then," said I, "put that ring upon her hand."

When the sword's point was withdrawn a few inches from his throat, he wedded her with the ring. But I added: "This is not enough. I shall send for two notaries, in order that the marriage may be ratified by contract." Bidding Chioccia go for the lawyers, I turned to the girl and her mother, and, using the French language, spoke as follows: "Notaries and witnesses are coming; the first of you who blabs about this affair will be killed upon the spot; nay, I will murder you all three. So beware, and keep a quiet tongue in your heads." To him I said in Italian: "If you offer any resistance to what I shall propose, upon the slightest word you utter I will stab you till your guts run out upon this floor." He answered: "Only promise not to kill me, and I will do whatever you command." The notaries and witnesses arrived; a contract, valid and in due form, was drawn up; then my heat and fever left me. I paid the lawyers and took my departure.

On the following day Bologna came to Paris on purpose, and sent for me through Mattio del Nasaro. I went to see him; and he met me with a glad face, entreating me to regard him as a brother, and saying that he would never speak about that work again, since he recognised quite well that I was right.

XXXIV

If I did not confess that in some of these episodes I acted wrongly, the world might think I was not telling the truth about those in which I say I acted rightly. Therefore I admit that it was a mistake to inflict so singular a vengeance upon Pagolo Micceri.

In truth, had I believed him to be so utterly feeble, I should not have conceived the notion of branding him with such infamy as I am going to relate.

Not satisfied with having made him take a vicious drab to wife, I completed my revenge by inviting her to sit to me as a model, and dealing with her thus. I gave her thirty sous a day, paid in advance, and a good meal, and obliged her to pose before me naked. Then I made her serve my pleasure, out of spite against her husband, jeering at them both the while. Furthermore, I kept her for hours together in position, greatly to her discomfort. This gave her as much annoyance as it gave me pleasure; for she was beautifully made, and brought me much credit as a model. At last, noticing that I did not treat her with the same consideration as before her marriage, she began to grumble and talk big in her French way about her husband, who was now serving the Prior of Capua, a brother of Piero Strozzi.[1] On the first occasion when she did this, the mere mention of the fellow roused me to intolerable fury; still I bore it, greatly against the grain, as well as I was able, reflecting that I could hardly find so suitable a subject for my art as she was. So I reasoned thus in my own mind: "I am now taking two different kinds of revenge. In the first place, she is married; and what I am doing to her husband is something far more serious than what he did to me, when she was only a girl of loose life. If then I wreak my spite so fully upon him, while upon her I inflict the discomfort of posing

[1] *Leone, son of Filippo Strozzi, Knight of Jerusalem and Prior of Capua, was, like his brother Piero, a distinguished French general.*

in such strange attitudes for such a length of time—which, beside the pleasure I derive, brings me both profit and credit through my art—what more can I desire?" While I was turning over these calculations, the wretch redoubled her insulting speeches, always prating big about her husband, till she goaded me beyond the bounds of reason. Yielding myself up to blind rage, I seized her by the hair, and dragged her up and down my room, beating and kicking her till I was tired. There was no one who could come to her assistance. When I had well pounded her she swore that she would never visit me again. Then for the first time I perceived that I had acted very wrongly; for I was losing a grand model, who brought me honour through my art. Moreover, when I saw her body all torn and bruised and swollen, I reflected that, even if I persuaded her to return, I should have to put her under medical treatment for at least a fortnight before I could make use of her.

XXXV

Well, to return to Caterina. I sent my old serving-woman, named Ruberta, who had a most kindly disposition, to help her dress. She brought food and drink to the miserable baggage; and after rubbing a little bacon fat into her worst wounds, they ate what was left of the meat together. When she had finished dressing, she went off blaspheming and cursing all Italians in the King's service, and so returned with tears and murmurs to her home.

Assuredly, upon that first occasion, I felt I had done very wrong, and Ruberta rebuked me after

this fashion: "You are a cruel monster to maltreat such a handsome girl so brutally." When I excused my conduct by narrating all the tricks which she and her mother had played off upon me under my own roof, Ruberta scoldingly replied that *that* was nothing—that was only French manners, and she was sure there was not a husband in France without his horns. When I heard this argument, I laughed aloud, and then told Ruberta to go and see how Caterina was, since I should like to employ her again while finishing the work I had on hand. The old woman took me sharply up, saying that I had no *savoir vivre:* "Only wait till daybreak, and she will come of herself; whereas, if you send to ask after her or visit her, she will give herself airs and keep away."

On the following morning Caterina came to our door, and knocked so violently, that, being below, I ran to see whether it was a madman or some member of the household. When I opened, the creature laughed and fell upon my neck, embracing and kissing me, and asked me if I was still angry with her. I said, "No!" Then she added: "Let me have something good to break my fast on." So I supplied her well with food, and partook of it at the same table in sign of reconciliation. Afterwards I began to model from her, during which occurred some amorous diversions; and at last, just at the same hour as on the previous day, she irritated me to such a pitch that I gave her the same drubbing. So we went on several days, repeating the old round like clockwork. There was little or no variation in the incidents.

Meanwhile, I completed my work in a style which

did me the greatest credit. Next I set about to cast it in bronze. This entailed some difficulties, to relate which would be interesting from the point of view of art; but since the whole history would occupy too much space, I must omit it. Suffice it to say, that the figure came out splendidly, and was as fine a specimen of foundry as had ever been seen.[1]

XXXVI

While this work was going forward, I set aside certain hours of the day for the salt-cellar, and certain others for the Jupiter. There were more men engaged upon the former than I had at my disposal for the latter, so the salt-cellar was by this time completely finished. The King had now returned to Paris; and when I paid him my respects, I took the piece with me. As I have already related, it was oval in form, standing about two-thirds of a cubit, wrought of solid gold, and worked entirely with the chisel. While speaking of the model, I said before how I had represented Sea and Earth, seated, with their legs interlaced, as we observe in the case of firths and promontories; this attitude was therefore metaphorically appropriate. The Sea carried a trident in his right hand, and in his left I put a ship of delicate workmanship to hold the salt. Below him were his four sea-horses, fashioned like our horses from the head to the front hoofs; all the rest of their body, from the middle backwards, resembled a fish, and the tails of these creatures were agreeably interwoven. Above this group the Sea sat throned in an

[1] *This figure was undoubtedly the Nymph of Fontainebleau.*

attitude of pride and dignity; around him were many kinds of fishes and other creatures of the ocean. The water was represented with its waves, and enamelled in the appropriate colour. I had portrayed earth under the form of a very handsome woman, holding her horn of plenty, entirely nude like the male figure; in her left hand I placed a little temple of Ionic architecture, most delicately wrought, which was meant to contain the pepper. Beneath her were the handsomest living creatures which the earth produces; and the rocks were partly enamelled, partly left in gold. The whole piece reposed upon a base of ebony, properly proportioned, but with a projecting cornice, upon which I introduced four golden figures in rather more than half-relief. They represented Night, Day, Twilight, and Dawn. I put, moreover, into the same frieze four other figures, similar in size, and intended for the four chief winds; these were executed, and in part enamelled, with the most exquisite refinement.[1]

When I exhibited this piece to his Majesty, he uttered a loud outcry of astonishment, and could not satiate his eyes with gazing at it. Then he bade me take it back to my house, saying he would tell me at the proper time what I should have to do with it. So I carried it home, and sent at once to invite several of my best friends; we dined gaily together, placing the salt-cellar in the middle of the table, and thus we were the first to use it. After this, I went on working at my Jupiter in silver, and also at the great vase I

[1] *This salt-cellar is now at Vienna. It is beautifully represented by two photogravures in Plon's great book on Cellini.*

have already described, which was richly decorated with a variety of ornaments and figures.

XXXVII

At that time Bologna, the painter, suggested to the King that it would be well if his Majesty sent him to Rome, with letters of recommendation, to the end that he might cast the foremost masterpieces of antiquity, namely, the Laocoon, the Cleopatra, the Venus, the Commodus, the Zingara, and the Apollo.[1] These, of a truth, are by far the finest things in Rome. He told the King that when his Majesty had once set eyes upon those marvellous works, he would then, and not till then, be able to criticise the arts of design, since everything which he had seen by us moderns was far removed from the perfection of the ancients. The King accepted his proposal, and gave him the introductions he required. Accordingly that beast went off, and took his bad luck with him. Not having the force and courage to contend with his own hands against me, he adopted the truly Lombard device of depreciating my performances by becoming a copyist of antiques. In its own proper place I shall relate how, though he had these statues excellently cast, he obtained a result quite contrary to his imagination.

I had now done forever with that disreputable

[1] *The Cleopatra is that recumbent statue of a sleeping Ariadne or Bacchante now in the Vatican. The Venus (neither the Medicean nor the Capitoline) represents the goddess issuing from the bath; it is now in the Museo Pio Clementino of the Vatican. The Commodus is a statue of Hercules, with the lion's skin and an infant in his arms, also in the Vatican. The Zingara may be a statue of Diana forming part of the Borghese collection. The Apollo is the famous Belvedere Apollo of the Vatican.*

Caterina, and the unfortunate young man, her husband, had decamped from Paris. Wanting then to finish off my Fontainebleau, which was already cast in bronze, as well as to execute the two Victories which were going to fill the angles above the lunette of the door, I engaged a poor girl of the age of about fifteen. She was beautifully made and of a brunette complexion. Being somewhat savage in her ways and spare of speech, quick in movement, with a look of sullenness about her eyes, I nicknamed her Scorzone;[1] her real name was Jeanne. With her for model, I gave perfect finish to the bronze Fontainebleau, and also to the two Victories.

Now this girl was a clean maid, and I got her with child. She gave birth to a daughter on the 7th of June, at thirteen hours of the day, in 1544, when I had exactly reached the age of forty-four. I named the infant Costanza; and M. Guido Guidi, the King's physician, and my most intimate friend, as I have previously related, held her at the font. He was the only godfather; for it is customary in France to have but one godfather and two godmothers. One of the latter was Madame Maddalena, wife to M. Luigi Alamanni, a gentleman of Florence and an accomplished poet. The other was the wife of M. Ricciardo del Bene, our Florentine burgher, and a great merchant in Paris; she was herself a French lady of distinguished family. This was the first child I ever had, so far as I remember. I settled money enough upon the girl for dowry to satisfy an aunt of hers, under whose tutelage I

[1] *That is, in Italian, "the rough rind," a name given to rustics. Scorzone is also the name for a little black venomous serpent.*

placed her, and from that time forwards I had nothing more to do with her.

XXXVIII

By labouring incessantly I had now got my various works well forward; the Jupiter was nearly finished, and the vase also; the door began to reveal its beauties. At that time the King came to Paris; and though I gave the right date of the year 1544 for my daughter's birth, we were still in 1543; but an opportunity of mentioning my daughter having arisen, I availed myself of it, so as not to interrupt the narrative of more important things. Well, the King, as I have said, came to Paris, and paid me a visit soon after his arrival. The magnificent show of works brought well-nigh to completion was enough to satisfy anybody's eyes; and indeed it gave that glorious monarch no less contentment than the artist who had worked so hard upon them desired. While inspecting these things, it came into his head that the Cardinal of Ferrara had fulfilled none of his promises to me, either as regarded a pension or anything else. Whispering with his Admiral, he said that the Cardinal of Ferrara had behaved very badly in the matter; and that he intended to make it up to me himself, because he saw I was a man of few words, who in the twinkling of an eye might decamp without complaining or asking leave.

On returning home, his Majesty, after dinner, told the Cardinal to give orders to his treasurer of the Exchequer that he should pay me at an early date seven thousand crowns of gold, in three or four instalments, according to his own convenience, pro-

vided only that he executed the commission faithfully. At the same time he repeated words to this effect: "I gave Benvenuto into your charge, and you have forgotten all about him." The Cardinal said that he would punctually perform his Majesty's commands; but his own bad nature made him wait till the King's fit of generosity was over. Meanwhile wars and rumours of wars were on the increase; it was the moment when the Emperor with a huge army was marching upon Paris.[1] Seeing the realm of France to be in great need of money, the Cardinal one day began to talk of me, and said: "Sacred Majesty, acting for the best, I have not had that money given to Benvenuto. First, it is solely wanted now for public uses. Secondly, so great a donation would have exposed you to the risk of losing Benvenuto altogether; for if he found himself a rich man, he might have invested his money in Italy, and the moment some caprice took hold of him, he would have decamped without hesitation. I therefore consider that your Majesty's best course will be to present him with something in your kingdom, if you want to keep him in your service for any length of time." The King, being really in want of money, approved of these arguments; nevertheless, like the noble soul he was, and truly worthy of his royal station, he judged rightly that the Cardinal had acted thus in order to curry favour rather than from any clear prevision of distressed finances in so vast a realm.

[1] *In* 1544 *Charles V. advanced toward Champagne and threatened Paris, while the English were besieging Boulogne.*

XXXIX

As I have just said, his Majesty affected to concur with the Cardinal, but his own private mind was otherwise made up. Accordingly, upon the day after his arrival, without solicitation upon my part, he came of his own accord to my house. I went to meet him, and conducted him through several rooms where divers works of art were on view. Beginning with the less important, I pointed out a quantity of things in bronze; and it was long since he had seen so many at once. Then I took him to see the Jupiter in silver, now nearly completed, with all its splendid decorations. It so happened that a grievous disappointment which he had suffered a few years earlier, made him think this piece more admirable than it might perhaps have appeared to any other man. The occasion to which I refer was this: After the capture of Tunis, the Emperor passed through Paris with the consent of his brother-in-law, King Francis,[1] who wanted to present him with something worthy of so great a potentate. Having this in view, he ordered a Hercules to be executed in silver, exactly of the same size as my Jupiter. The King declared this Hercules to be the ugliest work of art that he had ever seen, and spoke his opinion plainly to the craftsmen of Paris. They vaunted themselves to be the ablest craftsmen in the world for works of this kind, and informed the King that nothing more perfect could possibly have been produced in

[1] *In the year 1539 Charles V. obtained leave to traverse France with his army on the way to Flanders.*

silver, insisting at the same time upon being paid two thousand ducats for their filthy piece of work. This made the King, when he beheld mine, affirm that the finish of its workmanship exceeded his highest expectations. Accordingly he made an equitable judgment, and had my statue valued also at two thousand ducats, saying: "I gave those other men no salary; Cellini, who gets about a thousand crowns a year from me, can surely let me have this masterpiece for two thousand crowns of gold, since he has his salary into the bargain." Then I exhibited other things in gold and silver, and a variety of models for new undertakings. At the last, just when he was taking leave, I pointed out upon the lawn of the castle that great giant, which roused him to higher astonishment than any of the other things he had inspected. Turning to his Admiral, who was called Monsignor Aniballe,[1] he said: "Since the Cardinal has made him no provision, we must do so, and all the more because the man himself is so slow at asking favours—to cut it short, I mean to have him well provided for; yes, these men who ask for nothing feel that their masterpieces call aloud for recompense; therefore see that he gets the first abbey that falls vacant worth two thousand crowns a year. If this cannot be had in one benefice, let him have two or three to that amount, for in his case it will come to the same thing." As I was standing by, I could hear what the King said, and thanked his Majesty at once for the donation, as though I were already

[1] *Claude d'Annebault; captured at Pavia with François; Marshal in* 1538; *Admiral of France in* 1543.

in possession. I told him that as soon as his orders were carried into effect, I would work for his Majesty without other salary or recompense of any kind until old age deprived me of the power to labour, when I hoped to rest my tired body in peace, maintaining myself with honour on that income, and always bearing in mind that I had served so great a monarch as his Majesty. At the end of this speech the King turned toward me with a lively gesture and a joyous countenance, saying, "So let it then be done." After that he departed, highly satisfied with what he had seen there.

XL

Madame d'Etampes, when she heard how well my affairs were going, redoubled her spite against me, saying in her own heart: "It is I who rule the world to-day, and a little fellow like that snaps his fingers at me!" She put every iron into the fire which she could think of, in order to stir up mischief against me. Now a certain man fell in her way, who enjoyed great fame as a distiller; he supplied her with perfumed waters, which were excellent for the complexion, and hitherto unknown in France. This fellow she introduced to the King, who was much delighted by the processes for distilling which he exhibited. While engaged in these experiments, the man begged his Majesty to give him a tennis-court I had in my castle, together with some little apartments which he said I did not use. The good King, guessing who was at the bottom of the business, made no answer; but Madame d'Etampes used those wiles with which wo-

men know so well to work on men, and very easily succeeded in her enterprise; for having taken the King at a moment of amorous weakness, to which he was much subject, she wheedled him into conceding what she wanted.

The distiller came, accompanied by Treasurer Grolier, a very great nobleman of France, who spoke Italian excellently, and when he entered my castle, began to jest with me in that language.[1] Watching his opportunity,[2] he said: "In the King's name I put this man here into possession of that tennis-court, together with the lodgings that pertain to it." To this I answered: "The sacred King is lord of all things here: so then you might have effected an entrance with more freedom: coming thus with notaries and people of the court looks more like a fraud than the mandate of a powerful monarch. I assure you that, before I carry my complaints before the King, I shall defend my right in the way his Majesty gave me orders two days since to do. I shall fling the man whom you have put upon me out of windows if I do not see a warrant under the King's own hand and seal." After this speech the treasurer went off threatening and grumbling, and I remained doing the same, without, however, beginning the attack at once. Then I went to the notaries who had put the fellow in possession. I was well acquainted with them; and they gave me to understand that this was a formal proceeding, done indeed at the King's orders, but which had not any great significance; if I had offered some

[1] *Jean Grolier, the famous French Mæcenas, collector of books, antiquities, &c.*

[2] *Vedendo il bello.*

trifling opposition the fellow would not have installed himself as he had done. The formalities were acts and customs of the court, which did not concern obedience to the King; consequently, if I succeeded in ousting him, I should have acted rightly, and should not incur any risk.

This hint was enough for me, and next morning I had recourse to arms; and though the job cost me some trouble, I enjoyed it. Each day that followed, I made an attack with stones, pikes and arquebuses, firing, however, without ball; nevertheless, I inspired such terror that no one dared to help my antagonist. Accordingly, when I noticed one day that his defence was feeble, I entered the house by force, and expelled the fellow, turning all his goods and chattels into the street. Then I betook me to the King, and told him that I had done precisely as his Majesty had ordered, by defending myself against every one who sought to hinder me in his service. The King laughed at the matter, and made me out new letters-patent to secure me from further molestation.[1]

XLI

In the meantime I brought my silver Jupiter to completion, together with its gilded pedestal, which I placed upon a wooden plinth that only showed a very little; upon the plinth I introduced four little round balls of hard wood, more than half hidden in their sockets, like the nut of a crossbow. They were so nicely arranged that a child could push the statue forwards and backwards, or turn it round with ease.

[1] *This document exists, and is dated July 15, 1544. See Bianchi, p. 585.*

Having arranged it thus to my mind, I went with it to Fontainebleau, where the King was then residing.

At that time, Bologna, of whom I have already said so much, had brought from Rome his statues, and had cast them very carefully in bronze. I knew nothing about this, partly because he kept his doings very dark, and also because Fontainebleau is forty miles distant from Paris. On asking the King where he wanted me to set up my Jupiter, Madame d'Etampes, who happened to be present, told him there was no place more appropriate than his own handsome gallery. This was, as we should say in Tuscany, a loggia, or, more exactly, a large lobby; it ought indeed to be called a lobby, because what we mean by loggia is open at one side. The hall was considerably longer than 100 paces, decorated, and very rich with pictures from the hand of that admirable Rosso, our Florentine master. Among the pictures were arranged a great variety of sculptured works, partly in the round, and partly in bas-relief. The breadth was about twelve paces. Now Bologna had brought all his antiques into this gallery, wrought with great beauty in bronze, and had placed them in a handsome row upon their pedestals; and they were, as I have said, the choicest of the Roman antiquities. Into this same gallery I took my Jupiter; and when I saw that grand parade, so artfully planned, I said to myself: "This is like running the gauntlet;[1] now may God assist me." I placed the statue, and having arranged it as well as I was able, waited for the coming of the King. The Jupiter was raising his thunderbolt with

[1] *Questo si è come passare in fra le picche.*

the right hand in the act to hurl it; his left hand held the globe of the world. Among the flames of the thunderbolt I had very cleverly introduced a torch of white wax. Now Madame d'Etampes detained the King till nightfall, wishing to do one of two mischiefs, either to prevent his coming, or else to spoil the effect of my work by its being shown off after dark; but as God has promised to those who trust in Him, it turned out exactly opposite to her calculations; for when night came, I set fire to the torch, which, standing higher than the head of Jupiter, shed light from above and showed the statue far better than by daytime.

At length the King arrived; he was attended by his Madame d'Etampes, his son the Dauphin and the Dauphiness, together with the King of Navarre his brother-in-law, Madame Marguerite his daughter,[1] and several other great lords, who had been instructed by Madame d'Etampes to speak against me. When the King appeared, I made my prentice Ascanio push the Jupiter toward his Majesty. As it moved smoothly forwards, my cunning in its turn was amply rewarded, for this gentle motion made the figure seem alive; the antiques were left in the background, and my work was the first to take the eye with pleasure. The King exclaimed at once: "This is by far the finest thing that has ever been seen; and I, although I am an amateur and judge of art, could never have conceived the hundredth part of its beauty." The lords whose cue it was to speak against me, now seemed as though they could not praise my master-

[1] *Born* 1523. *Married Emmanuele Filiberto, Duke of Savoy, in* 1559. *Died* 1574.

piece enough. Madame d'Etampes said boldly: "One would think you had no eyes! Don't you see all those fine bronzes from the antique behind there? In those consists the real distinction of this art, and not in that modern trumpery." Then the King advanced, and the others with him. After casting a glance at the bronzes, which were not shown to advantage from the light being below them, he exclaimed: "Whoever wanted to injure this man has done him a great service; for the comparison of these admirable statues demonstrates the immeasurable superiority of his work in beauty and in art. Benvenuto deserves to be made much of, for his performances do not merely rival, but surpass the antique." In reply to this, Madame d'Etampes observed that my Jupiter would not make anything like so fine a show by daylight; besides, one had to consider that I had put a veil upon my statue to conceal its faults. I had indeed flung a gauze veil with elegance and delicacy over a portion of my statue, with the view of augmenting its majesty. This, when she had finished speaking, I lifted from beneath, uncovering the handsome genital members of the god; then tore the veil to pieces with vexation. She imagined I had disclosed those parts of the statue to insult her. The King noticed how angry she was, while I was trying to force some words out in my fury; so he wisely spoke, in his own language, precisely as follows: "Benvenuto, I forbid you to speak; hold your tongue, and you shall have a thousand times more wealth than you desire." Not being allowed to speak, I writhed my body in a rage; this made

FRANCESCO DE' MEDICI
(BRONZINO)

her grumble with redoubled spite; and the King departed sooner than he would otherwise have done, calling aloud, however, to encourage me: "I have brought from Italy the greatest man who ever lived, endowed with all the talents."

XLII

I left the Jupiter there, meaning to depart the next morning. Before I took horse, one thousand crowns were paid me, partly for my salary, and partly on account of moneys I had disbursed. Having received this sum, I returned with a light heart and satisfied to Paris. No sooner had I reached home and dined with merry cheer, than I called for all my wardrobe, which included a great many suits of silk, choice furs, and also very fine cloth stuffs. From these I selected presents for my work-people, giving each something according to his desert, down to the servant-girls and stable-boys, in order to encourage them to aid me heartily.

Being then refreshed in strength and spirits, I attacked the great statue of Mars, which I had set up solidly upon a frame of well-connected woodwork.[1] Over this there lay a crust of plaster, about the eighth of a cubit in thickness, carefully modelled for the flesh of the Colossus. Lastly, I prepared a great number of moulds in separate pieces to compose the figure, intending to dovetail them together in accordance with the rules of art; and this task involved no difficulty.

[1] *This was what he called the Colossus above, p.* 163. *He meant it for the fountain of Fontainebleau. See p.* 141.

I will not here omit to relate something which may serve to give a notion of the size of this great work, and is at the same time highly comic. It must first be mentioned that I had forbidden all the men who lived at my cost to bring light women into my house or anywhere within the castle precincts. Upon this point of discipline I was extremely strict. Now my lad Ascanio loved a very handsome girl, who returned his passion. One day she gave her mother the slip, and came to see Ascanio at night. Finding that she would not take her leave, and being driven to his wits' ends to conceal her, like a person of resources, he hit at last upon the plan of installing her inside the statue. There, in the head itself, he made her up a place to sleep in; this lodging she occupied some time, and he used to bring her forth at whiles with secrecy by night. I meanwhile having brought this part of the Colossus almost to completion, left it alone, and indulged my vanity a bit by exposing it to sight; it could, indeed, be seen by more than half Paris. The neighbours, therefore, took to climbing their house-roofs, and crowds came on purpose to enjoy the spectacle. Now there was a legend in the city that my castle had from olden times been haunted by a spirit, though I never noticed anything to confirm this belief; and folk in Paris called it popularly by the name of Lemmonio Boreò.[1] The girl, while she sojourned in the statue's head, could not prevent some of her movements to and fro from being perceptible through

[1] *Properly, Le Moine Bourru, the ghost of a monk dressed in drugget (bure). Le Petit Nesle had a bad reputation on account of the murders said to have been committed there in the fourteenth century by Queen Jeanne, wife of Philip V.*

its eye-holes; this made stupid people say that the ghost had got into the body of the figure, and was setting its eyes in motion, and its mouth, as though it were about to talk. Many of them went away in terror; others, more incredulous, came to observe the phenomenon, and when they were unable to deny the flashing of the statue's eyes, they too declared their credence in a spirit—not guessing that there was a spirit there, and sound young flesh to boot.

XLIII

All this while I was engaged in putting my door together, with its several appurtenances. As it is no part of my purpose to include in this autobiography such things as annalists record, I have omitted the coming of the Emperor with his great host, and the King's mustering of his whole army.[1] At the time when these events took place, his Majesty sought my advice with regard to the instantaneous fortification of Paris. He came on purpose to my house, and took me all round the city; and when he found that I was prepared to fortify the town with expedition on a sound plan, he gave express orders that all my suggestions should be carried out. His Admiral was directed to command the citizens to obey me under pain of his displeasure.

Now the Admiral had been appointed through Madame d'Etampes' influence rather than from any proof of his ability, for he was a man of little talent. He bore the name of M. d'Annebault, which in our

[1] *Toward the end of August 1544, the Imperial army advanced as far as Epernay, within twenty leagues of Paris.*

tongue is Monsignor d'Aniballe; but the French pronounced it so that they usually made it sound like Monsignore Asino Bue.[1] This animal then referred to Madame d'Etampes for advice upon the matter, and she ordered him to summon Girolamo Bellarmato without loss of time.[2] He was an engineer from Siena, at that time in Dieppe, which is rather more than a day's journey distant from the capital. He came at once, and set the work of fortification going on a very tedious method, which made me throw the job up. If the Emperor had pushed forward at this time, he might easily have taken Paris. People indeed said that, when a treaty of peace was afterwards concluded, Madame d'Etampes, who took more part in it than anybody else, betrayed the King.[3] I shall pass this matter over without further words, since it has nothing to do with the plan of my *Memoirs*. Meanwhile, I worked diligently at the door, and finished the vase, together with two others of middling size, which I made of my own silver. At the end of those great troubles, the King came to take his ease awhile in Paris.

That accursed woman seemed born to be the ruin of the world. I ought therefore to think myself of some account, seeing she held me for her mortal enemy. Happening to speak one day with the good King about my matters, she abused me to such an

[1] *i.e., ass-ox, Ane-et-bo.*

[2] *Girolamo Bellarmati, a learned mathematician and military architect, banished from Siena for political reasons. He designed the harbour of Havre.*

[3] *There is indeed good reason to believe that the King's mistress, in her jealousy of the Dauphin and Diane de Poitiers, played false, and enabled the Imperialists to advance beyond Epernay.*

extent that he swore, in order to appease her, he would take no more heed of me thenceforward than if he had never set eyes upon my face. These words were immediately brought me by a page of Cardinal Ferrara, called Il Villa, who said he had heard the King utter them. I was infuriated to such a pitch that I dashed my tools across the room and all the things I was at work on, made my arrangements to quit France, and went upon the spot to find the King. When he had dined, I was shown into a room where I found his Majesty in the company of a very few persons. After I had paid him the respects due to kings, he bowed his head with a gracious smile. This revived hope in me; so I drew nearer to his Majesty, for they were showing him some things in my own line of art; and after we had talked awhile about such matters, he asked if I had anything worth seeing at my house, and next inquired when I should like him to come. I replied that I had some pieces ready to show his Majesty, if he pleased, at once. He told me to go home and he would come immediately.

XLIV

I went accordingly, and waited for the good King's visit, who, it seems, had gone meanwhile to take leave of Madame d'Etampes. She asked whither he was bound, adding that she would accompany him; but when he informed her, she told him that she would not go, and begged him as a special favour not to go himself that day. She had to return to the charge more than twice before she shook the King's

determination; however, he did not come to visit me that day. Next morning I went to his Majesty at the same hour; and no sooner had he caught sight of me, than he swore it was his intention to come to me upon the spot. Going then, according to his wont, to take leave of his dear Madame d'Etampes, this lady saw that all her influence had not been able to divert him from his purpose; so she began with that biting tongue of hers to say the worst of me that could be insinuated against a deadly enemy of this most worthy crown of France. The good King appeased her by replying that the sole object of his visit was to administer such a scolding as should make me tremble in my shoes. This he swore to do upon his honour. Then he came to my house, and I conducted him through certain rooms upon the basement, where I had put the whole of my great door together. Upon beholding it, the King was struck with stupefaction, and quite lost his cue for reprimanding me, as he had promised Madame d'Etampes. Still he did not choose to go away without finding some opportunity for scolding; so he began in this wise: "There is one most important matter, Benvenuto, which men of your sort, though full of talent, ought always to bear in mind; it is that you cannot bring your great gifts to light by your own strength alone; you show your greatness only through the opportunities we give you. Now you ought to be a little more submissive, not so arrogant and headstrong. I remember that I gave you express orders to make me twelve silver statues; and this was all I wanted. You have chosen to execute a salt-cellar, and vases

and busts and doors, and a heap of other things, which quite confound me, when I consider how you have neglected my wishes and worked for the fulfilment of your own. If you mean to go on in this way, I shall presently let you understand what is my own method of procedure when I choose to have things done in my own way. I tell you, therefore, plainly: do your utmost to obey my commands; for if you stick to your own fancies, you will run your head against a wall." While he was uttering these words, his lords in waiting hung upon the King's lips, seeing him shake his head, frown, and gesticulate, now with one hand and now with the other. The whole company of attendants, therefore, quaked with fear for me; but I stood firm, and let no breath of fear pass over me.

XLV

When he had wound up this sermon, agreed upon beforehand with his darling Madame d'Etampes, I bent one leg upon the ground, and kissed his coat above the knee. Then I began my speech as follows: "Sacred Majesty, I admit that all that you have said is true. Only, in reply, I protest that my heart has ever been, by day and night, with all my vital forces, bent on serving you and executing your commands. If it appears to your Majesty that my actions contradict these words, let your Majesty be sure that Benvenuto was not at fault, but rather possibly my evil fate or adverse fortune, which has made me unworthy to serve the most admirable prince who ever blessed this earth. Therefore I crave your pardon.

I was under the impression, however, that your Majesty had given me silver for one statue only; having no more at my disposal, I could not execute others; so, with the surplus which remained for use, I made this vase, to show your Majesty the grand style of the ancients. Perhaps you never had seen anything of the sort before. As for the salt-cellar, I thought, if my memory does not betray me, that your Majesty on one occasion ordered me to make it of your own accord. The conversation falling upon something of the kind which had been brought for your inspection, I showed you a model made by me in Italy; you, following the impulse of your own mind only, had a thousand golden ducats told out for me to execute the piece withal, thanking me in addition for my hint; and what is more, I seem to remember that you commended me highly when it was completed. As regards the door, it was my impression that, after we had chanced to speak about it at some time or other, your Majesty gave orders to your chief secretary, M. Villerois, from whom the order passed to M. de Marmagne and M. de la Fa, to this effect, that all these gentlemen should keep me going at the work, and see that I obtained the necessary funds. Without such commission I should certainly not have been able to advance so great an undertaking on my own resources. As for the bronze heads, the pedestal of Jupiter and other such-like things, I will begin by saying that I cast those heads upon my own account, in order to become acquainted with French clays, of which, as a foreigner, I had no previous knowledge whatsoever. Unless I had made the

experiment, I could not have set about casting those large works. Now, touching the pedestals, I have to say that I made them because I judged them necessary to the statues. Consequently, in all that I have done, I meant to act for the best, and at no point to swerve from your Majesty's expressed wishes. It is indeed true that I set that huge Colossus up to satisfy my own desire, paying for it from my own purse, even to the point which it has reached, because I thought that, you being the great king you are, and I the trifling artist that I am, it was my duty to erect for your glory and my own a statue, the like of which the ancients never saw. Now, at the last, having been taught that God is not inclined to make me worthy of so glorious a service, I beseech your Majesty, instead of the noble recompense you had in mind to give me for my labours, bestow upon me only one small trifle of your favour, and therewith the leave to quit your kingdom. At this instant, if you condescend to my request, I shall return to Italy, always thanking God and your Majesty for the happy hours which I have passed in serving you."

XLVI

The King stretched forth his own hands and raised me very graciously. Then he told me that I ought to continue in his service, and that all that I had done was right and pleasing to him. Turning to the lords in his company, he spoke these words precisely: "I verily believe that a finer door could not be made for Paradise itself." When he had ceased speaking, although his speech had been entirely in my favour, I

again thanked him respectfully, repeating, however, my request for leave to travel; for the heat of my indignation had not yet cooled down. His Majesty, feeling that I set too little store upon his unwonted and extraordinary condescension, commanded me with a great and terrible voice to hold my tongue, unless I wanted to incur his wrath; afterwards he added that he would drown me in gold, and that he gave me the leave I asked; and over and above the works he had commissioned,[1] he was very well satisfied with what I had done on my own account in the interval; I should never henceforth have any quarrels with him, because he knew my character; and for my part, I too ought to study the temper of his Majesty, as my duty required. I answered that I thanked God and his Majesty for everything; then I asked him to come and see how far I had advanced the great Colossus. So he came to my house, and I had the statue uncovered; he admired it extremely, and gave orders to his secretary to pay me all the money I had spent upon it, be the sum what it might, provided I wrote the bill out in my own hand. Then he departed, saying: "Adieu, mon ami," which is a phrase not often used by kings.

XLVII

After returning to his palace, he called to mind the words I had spoken in our previous interview, some of which were so excessively humble, and others so

[1] *The MSS. in this phrase vary, and the meaning is not quite clear. According to one reading, the sense would be: "Though the works he had commissioned were not yet begun." But this involves an awkward use of the word dipoi.*

proud and haughty, that they caused him no small irritation. He repeated a few of them in the presence of Madame d'Etampes and Monsignor di San Polo, a great baron of France.[1] This man had always professed much friendship for me in the past, and certainly, on that occasion, he showed his good-will, after the French fashion, with great cleverness. It happened thus: the King in the course of a long conversation complained that the Cardinal of Ferrara, to whose care he had entrusted me, never gave a thought to my affairs; so far as he was concerned, I might have decamped from the realm; therefore he must certainly arrange for committing me to some one who would appreciate me better, because he did not want to run a farther risk of losing me. At these words Monsieur de Saint Paul expressed his willingness to undertake the charge, saying that if the King appointed him my guardian, he would act so that I should never have the chance to leave the kingdom. The King replied that he was very well satisfied, if only Saint Paul would explain the way in which he meant to manage me. Madame sat by with an air of sullen irritation, and Saint Paul stood on his dignity, declining to answer the King's question. When the King repeated it, he said, to curry favour with Madame d'Etampes: "I would hang that Benvenuto of yours by the neck, and thus you would keep him forever in your kingdom." She broke into a fit of laughter, protesting that I richly deserved it. The King, to keep them company, began to laugh,

[1] *François de Bourbon, Comte de Saint Paul, one of the chief companions in arms and captains of François I.*

and said he had no objection to Saint Paul hanging me, if he could first produce my equal in the arts; and although I had not earned such a fate, he gave him full liberty and license. In this way that day ended, and I came off safe and sound, for which may God be praised and thanked.

XLVIII

The King had now made peace with the Emperor, but not with the English, and these devils were keeping us in constant agitation.[1] His Majesty had therefore other things than pleasure to attend to. He ordered Piero Strozzi to go with ships of war into the English waters; but this was a very difficult undertaking, even for that great commander, without a paragon at his times in the art of war, and also without a paragon in his misfortunes. Several months passed without my receiving money or commissions; accordingly, I dismissed my work-people with the exception of the two Italians, whom I set to making two big vases out of my own silver; for these men could not work in bronze. After they had finished these, I took them to a city which belonged to the Queen of Navarre; it is called Argentana, and is distant several days' journey from Paris.[2] On arriving at this place, I found that the King was indisposed; and the Cardinal of Ferrara told his Majesty that I was come. He made no answer, which obliged

[1] *The peace of Crépy was concluded September* 18, 1544. *The English had taken Boulogne four days earlier. Peace between France and England was not concluded till June* 7, 1546.

[2] *Argentan, the city of the Duchy of Alençon. Margaret, it will be remembered, had been first married to the Duc d'Alençon, and after his death retained his fiefs.*

me to stay several days kicking my heels. Of a truth, I never was more uncomfortable in my life; but at last I presented myself one evening and offered the two vases for the King's inspection. He was excessively delighted, and when I saw him in good humour, I begged his Majesty to grant me the favour of permitting me to travel into Italy; I would leave the seven months of my salary which were due, and his Majesty might condescend to pay me when I required money for my return journey. I entreated him to grant this petition, seeing that the times were more for fighting than for making statues; moreover, his Majesty had allowed a similar license to Bologna the painter, wherefore I humbly begged him to concede the same to me. While I was uttering these words the King kept gazing intently on the vases, and from time to time shot a terrible glance at me; nevertheless, I went on praying to the best of my ability that he would favour my petition. All of a sudden he rose angrily from his seat, and said to me in Italian: "Benvenuto, you are a great fool. Take these vases back to Paris, for I want to have them gilt." Without making any other answer he then departed.

I went up to the Cardinal of Ferrara, who was present, and besought him, since he had already conferred upon me the great benefit of freeing me from prison in Rome, with many others besides, to do me this one favour more of procuring for me leave to travel into Italy. He answered that he should be very glad to do his best to gratify me in this matter; I might leave it without farther thought to him, and even if I chose, might set off at once, because he

would act for the best in my interest with the King. I told the Cardinal that since I was aware his Majesty had put me under the protection of his most reverend lordship, if he gave me leave, I felt ready to depart, and promised to return upon the smallest hint from his reverence. The Cardinal then bade me go back to Paris and wait there eight days, during which time he would procure the King's license for me; if his Majesty refused to let me go, he would without fail inform me; but if I received no letters, that would be a sign that I might set off with an easy mind.

XLIX

I obeyed the Cardinal, and returned to Paris, where I made excellent cases for my three silver vases. After the lapse of twenty days, I began my preparations, and packed the three vases upon a mule. This animal had been lent me for the journey to Lyons by the Bishop of Pavia, who was now once more installed in my castle.

Then I departed in my evil hour, together with Signor Ippolito Gonzaga, at that time in the pay of the King, and also in the service of Count Galeotto della Mirandola. Some other gentlemen of the said count went with us, as well as Lionardo Tedaldi, our fellow-citizen of Florence.

I made Ascanio and Pagolo guardians of my castle and all my property, including two little vases which were only just begun; those I left behind in order that the two young men might not be idle. I had lived very handsomely in Paris, and therefore there was a large amount of costly household furniture: the whole

value of these effects exceeded 1500 crowns. I bade Ascanio remember what great benefits I had bestowed upon him, and that up to the present he had been a mere thoughtless lad; the time was now come for him to show the prudence of a man; therefore I thought fit to leave him in the custody of all my goods, as also of my honour. If he had the least thing to complain of from those brutes of Frenchmen, he was to let me hear at once, because I would take post and fly from any place in which I found myself, not only to discharge the great obligations under which I lay to that good King, but also to defend my honour. Ascanio replied with the tears of a thief and hypocrite: "I have never known a father better than you are, and all things which a good son is bound to perform for a good father will I ever do for you." So then I took my departure, attended by a servant and a little French lad.

It was just past noon, when some of the King's treasurers, by no means friends of mine, made a visit to my castle. The rascally fellows began by saying that I had gone off with the King's silver, and told Messer Guido and the Bishop of Pavia to send at once off after his Majesty's vases; if not, they would themselves despatch a messenger to get them back, and do me some great mischief. The Bishop and Messer Guido were much more frightened than was necessary; so they sent that traitor Ascanio by the post off on the spot. He made his appearance before me about midnight. I had not been able to sleep, and kept revolving sad thoughts to the following effect: "In whose hands have I left my property, my castle?

Oh, what a fate is this of mine, which forces me to take this journey! May God grant only that the Cardinal is not of one mind with Madame d'Etampes, who has nothing else so much at heart as to make me lose the grace of that good King."

L

While I was thus dismally debating with myself, I heard Ascanio calling me. On the instant I jumped out of bed, and asked if he brought good or evil tidings. The knave answered: "They are good news I bring; but you must only send back those three vases, for the rascally treasurers keep shouting, 'Stop, thief!' So the Bishop and Messer Guido say that you must absolutely send them back. For the rest you need have no anxiety, but may pursue your journey with a light heart." I handed over the vases immediately, two of them being my own property, together with the silver and much else besides.[1] I had meant to take them to the Cardinal of Ferrara's abbey at Lyons; for though people accused me of wanting to carry them into Italy, everybody knows quite well that it is impossible to export money, gold, or silver from France without special license. Consider, therefore, whether I could have crossed the frontier with those three great vases, which, together with their cases, were a whole mule's burden! It is certainly true that, since these articles were of great value and the highest beauty, I felt uneasiness in case the King should die, and I had lately left him in a

[1] *Con l'argento e ogni cosa. These words refer perhaps to the vases: "the silver and everything pertaining to them."*

very bad state of health; therefore I said to myself: "If such an accident should happen, having these things in the keeping of the Cardinal, I shall not lose them."

Well, to cut the story short, I sent back the mule with the vases, and other things of importance; then, upon the following morning, I travelled forward with the company I have already mentioned, nor could I, through the whole journey, refrain from sighing and weeping. Sometimes, however, I consoled myself with God by saying: "Lord God, before whose eyes the truth lies open! Thou knowest that my object in this journey is only to carry alms to six poor miserable virgins and their mother, my own sister. They have indeed their father, but he is very old, and gains nothing by his trade; I fear, therefore, lest they might too easily take to a bad course of life. Since, then, I am performing a true act of piety, I look to Thy Majesty for aid and counsel." This was all the recreation I enjoyed upon my forward journey.

We were one day distant from Lyons, and it was close upon the hour of twenty-two, when the heavens began to thunder with sharp rattling claps, although the sky was quite clear at the time.[1] I was riding a crossbow shot before my comrades. After the thunder the heavens made a noise so great and horrible that I thought the last day had come; so I reined in for a moment, while a shower of hail began to fall without a drop of water. At first the hail was

[1] *E l'aria era bianchissima. Perhaps this ought to be: "and the air blazed with lightnings." Goethe takes it as I do above.*

somewhat larger than pellets from a popgun, and when these struck me, they hurt considerably. Little by little it increased in size, until the stones might be compared to balls from a crossbow. My horse became restive with fright; so I wheeled round, and returned at a gallop to where I found my comrades taking refuge in a fir-wood. The hail now grew to the size of big lemons. I began to sing a Miserere; and while I was devoutly uttering this psalm to God, there fell a stone so huge that it smashed the thick branch of the pine under which I had retired for safety. Another of the hailstones hit my horse upon the head, and almost stunned him; one struck me also, but not directly, else it would have killed me. In like manner, poor old Lionardo Tedaldi, who like me was kneeling on the ground, received so shrewd a blow that he fell grovelling upon all fours. When I saw that the fir bough offered no protection, and that I ought to act as well as to intone my Misereres, I began at once to wrap my mantle round my head. At the same time I cried to Lionardo, who was shrieking for succour, "Jesus! Jesus!" that Jesus would help him if he helped himself. I had more trouble in looking after this man's safety than my own. The storm raged for some while, but at last it stopped; and we, who were pounded black and blue, scrambled as well as we could upon our horses. Pursuing the way to our lodging for the night, we showed our scratches and bruises to each other; but about a mile farther on we came upon a scene of devastation which surpassed what we had suffered, and defies description. All the trees were stripped of

their leaves and shattered; the beasts in the field lay dead; many of the herdsmen had also been killed; we observed large quantities of hailstones which could not have been grasped with two hands. Feeling then that we had come well out of a great peril, we acknowledged that our prayers to God and Misereres had helped us more than we could have helped ourselves. Returning thanks to God, therefore, we entered Lyons in the course of the next day, and tarried there eight days. At the end of this time, being refreshed in strength and spirits, we resumed our journey, and passed the mountains without mishap. On the other side I bought a little pony, because the baggage which I carried had somewhat overtired my horses.

LI

After we had been one day in Italy, the Count Galeotto della Mirandola joined us. He was travelling by post; and stopping where we were, he told me that I had done wrong to leave France; I ought not to journey forwards, for, if I returned at once, my affairs would be more prosperous than ever. On the other hand, if I persisted in my course, I was giving the game up to my enemies, and furnishing them with opportunities to do me mischief. By returning I might put a stop to their intrigues; and those in whom I placed the most confidence were just the men who played most traitorously. He would not say more than that he knew very well all about it; and, indeed, the Cardinal of Ferrara had now conspired with the two rogues I left in charge of all my

business. Having repeated over and over again that I ought absolutely to turn back, he went onward with the post, while I, being influenced by my companions, could not make my mind up to return. My heart was sorely torn asunder, at one moment by the desire to reach Florence as quickly as I could, and at another by the conviction that I ought to regain France. At last, in order to end the fever of this irresolution, I determined to take the post for Florence. I could not make arrangements with the first postmaster, but persisted in my purpose to press forward and endure an anxious life at Florence.[1]

I parted company with Signor Ippolito Gonzaga, who took the route for Mirandola, while I diverged upon the road to Parma and Piacenza. In the latter city I met Duke Pier Luigi upon the street, who stared me in the face, and recognised me.[2] Since I knew him to have been the sole cause of my imprisonment in the castle of S. Angelo, the sight of him made my blood boil. Yet being unable to escape from the man, I decided to pay him my respects, and arrived just after he had risen from table in the company of the Landi, who afterwards murdered him. On my appearance he received me with unbounded marks of esteem and affection, among which he took

[1] *The text here is obscure. The words "venire a tribulare" might mean "to get, by any means, however inconvenient, to Florence." I have chosen another interpretation in the text, as more consonant with the Italian idiom. For Cellini's use of tribulare or tribolare, see lib. i.* 112, *andando a tribolare la vita tua.*

[2] *Pier Luigi Farnese was not formally invested with the Duchy of Parma and Piacenza until September* 1545. *Cellini, therefore, gives him this title as Duke of Castro. He was assassinated on September* 10, 1547. *The Landi, among other noblemen of the duchy, took part in a conspiracy which had its ground in Pier Luigi's political errors no less than in his intolerable misgovernment and infamous private life.*

occasion to remark to the gentlemen present that I was the first artist of the world in my own line, and that I had been for a long while in prison at Rome. Then he turned to me and said: "My Benvenuto, I was deeply grieved for your misfortune, and knew well that you were innocent, but could not do anything to help you. In short, it was my father, who chose to gratify some enemies of yours, from whom, moreover, he heard that you had spoken ill of him. I am convinced this was not true, and indeed I was heartily sorry for your troubles." These words he kept piling up and repeating until he seemed to be begging my pardon. Afterwards he inquired about the work I had been doing for his Most Christian Majesty; and on my furnishing him with details, he listened as attentively and graciously as possible. Then he asked if I had a mind to serve him. To this I replied that my honour would not allow me to do so; but that if I had completed those extensive works begun for the King, I should be disposed to quit any great prince merely to enter his Excellency's service.

Hereby it may be seen how the power and goodness of God never leave unpunished any sort or quality of men who act unjustly toward the innocent. This man did what was equivalent to begging my pardon in the presence of those very persons who subsequently took revenge on him for me and many others whom he had massacred. Let then no prince, however great he be, laugh at God's justice, in the way that many whom I know are doing, and who have cruelly maltreated me, as I shall relate at the proper time. I do

not write these things in any worldly spirit of boasting, but only to return thanks to God, my deliverer in so many trials. In those too which daily assail me, I always carry my complaint to Him, and call on Him to be my defender. On all occasions, after I have done my best to aid myself, if I lose courage and my feeble forces fail, then is the great might of God manifested, which descends unexpectedly on those who wrongfully injure their neighbours, or neglect the grave and honourable charge they have received from Him.

LII

When I returned to my inn, I found that the Duke had sent me abundance to eat and drink of very excellent quality. I made a hearty meal, then mounted and rode toward Florence. There I found my sister with six daughters, the eldest of whom was marriageable and the youngest still at nurse. Her husband, by reason of divers circumstances in the city, had lost employment from his trade. I had sent gems and French jewellery, more than a year earlier, to the amount of about two thousand ducats, and now brought with me the same wares to the value of about one thousand crowns. I discovered that, whereas I made them an allowance of four golden crowns a month, they always drew considerable sums from the current sale of these articles. My brother-in-law was such an honest fellow, that, fearing to give me cause for anger, he had pawned nearly everything he possessed, and was devoured by interest, in his anxiety to leave my moneys untouched. It seems that my allowance, made by way of charity, did not suffice

ELEONORA DI TOLEDO AND FERDINANDO DE' MEDICI
(BRONZINO)

for the needs of the family. When then I found him so honest in his dealings, I felt inclined to raise his pension; and it was my intention, before leaving Florence, to make some arrangement for all of his daughters.[1]

LIII

The Duke of Florence at this time, which was the month of August 1545, had retired to Poggio a Cajano, ten miles distant from Florence. Thither then I went to pay him my respects, with the sole object of acting as duty required, first because I was a Florentine, and next because my forefathers had always been adherents of the Medicean party, and I yielded to none of them in affection for this Duke Cosimo. As I have said, then, I rode to Poggio with the sole object of paying my respects, and with no intention of accepting service under him, as God, who does all things well, did then appoint for me.

When I was introduced, the Duke received me very kindly; then he and the Duchess put questions concerning the works which I had executed for the King.[2] I answered willingly and in detail. After listening to my story, he answered that he had heard as much, and that I spoke the truth. Then he assumed a tone of sympathy, and added: "How small a recompense for such great and noble masterpieces! Friend Benvenuto, if you feel inclined to execute

[1] *Though this paragraph is confused, the meaning seems to be that Cellini's brother-in-law did not use the money which accrued from the sale of jewellery, and got into debt, because his allowance was inadequate, and he was out of work.*

[2] *This Duchess was Eleonora di Toledo, well known to us through Bronzino's portrait.*

something for me too, I am ready to pay you far better than that King of yours has done, for whom your excellent nature prompts you to speak so gratefully." When I understood his drift, I described the deep obligations under which I lay to his Majesty, who first obtained my liberation from that iniquitous prison, and afterwards supplied me with the means of carrying out more admirable works than any artist of my quality had ever had the chance to do. While I was thus speaking, my lord the Duke writhed on his chair, and seemed as though he could not bear to hear me to the end. Then, when I had concluded, he rejoined: "If you are disposed to work for me, I will treat you in a way that will astonish you, provided the fruits of your labours give me satisfaction, of which I have no doubt." I, poor unhappy mortal, burning with desire to show the noble school[1] of Florence that, after leaving her in youth, I had practised other branches of the art than she imagined, gave answer to the Duke that I would willingly erect for him in marble or in bronze a mighty statue on his fine piazza. He replied that, for a first essay, he should like me to produce a Perseus; he had long set his heart on having such a monument, and he begged me to begin a model for the same.[2] I very gladly set myself to the task, and in a few weeks I finished my model, which was about a cubit high,

[1] *This school was the Collegio dei Maestri di Belle Arti in Florence, who had hitherto known of Cellini mainly as a goldsmith.*

[2] *Cosimo chose the subject of Perseus because it symbolised his own victory over the Gorgon of tyrannicide and Republican partisanship. Donatello's Judith, symbolising justifiable regicide, and Michel Angelo's David, symbolising the might of innocent right against an overbearing usurper, already decorated the Florentine piazza. Until lately, both of these masterpieces stood together there with the Perseus of Cellini.*

in yellow wax and very delicately finished in all its details. I had made it with the most thorough study and art.[1]

The Duke returned to Florence, but several days passed before I had an opportunity of showing my model. It seemed indeed as though he had never set eyes on me or spoken with me, and this caused me to augur ill of my future dealings with his Excellency. Later on, however, one day after dinner, I took it to his wardrobe, where he came to inspect it with the Duchess and a few gentlemen of the court. No sooner had he seen it than he expressed much pleasure, and extolled it to the skies; wherefrom I gathered some hope that he might really be a connoisseur of art. After having well considered it for some time, always with greater satisfaction, he began as follows: "If you could only execute this little model, Benvenuto, with the same perfection on a large scale, it would be the finest piece in the piazza." I replied: "Most excellent my lord, upon the piazza are now standing works by the great Donatello and the incomparable Michel Angelo, the two greatest men who have ever lived since the days of the ancients.[2] But since your Excellence encourages my model with such praise, I feel the heart to execute it at least thrice as well in bronze."[3] No slight dispute arose upon this declaration; the Duke pro-

[1] *This is probably the precious model now existing in the Bargello Palace at Florence, in many points more interesting than the completed bronze statue under the Loggia de' Lanzi.*

[2] *Donatello's Judith and Holofernes; Michel Angelo's David.*

[3] *It is difficult to give the exact sense of pertanto and perchè in the text; but I think the drift of the sentence is rendered above.*

testing that he understood these matters perfectly, and was quite aware what could be done. I rejoined that my achievements would resolve his dubitations and debates; I was absolutely sure of being able to perform far more than I had promised for his Excellency, but that he must give me means for carrying my work out, else I could not fulfil my undertaking. In return for this his Excellency bade me formulate my demands in a petition, detailing all my requirements; he would see them liberally attended to.

It is certain that if I had been cunning enough to secure by contract all I wanted for my work, I should not have incurred the great troubles which came upon me through my own fault. But he showed the strongest desire to have the work done, and the most perfect willingness to arrange preliminaries. I therefore, not discerning that he was more a merchant than a duke, dealt very frankly with his Excellency, just as if I had to do with a prince, and not with a commercial man. I sent in my petition, to which he replied in large and ample terms. The memorandum ran as follows: "Most rare and excellent my patron, petitions of any validity and compacts between us of any value do not rest upon words or writings; the whole point is that I should succeed in my work according to my promise; and if I so succeed, I feel convinced that your most illustrious Excellency will very well remember what you have engaged to do for me." This language so charmed the Duke both with my ways of acting and of speaking that he and the Duchess began to treat me with extraordinary marks of favour.

LIV

Being now inflamed with a great desire to begin working, I told his Excellency that I had need of a house where I could install myself and erect furnaces, in order to commence operations in clay and bronze, and also, according to their separate requirements, in gold and silver. I knew that he was well aware how thoroughly I could serve him in those several branches, and I required some dwelling fitted for my business. In order that his Excellency might perceive how earnestly I wished to work for him, I had already chosen a convenient house, in a quarter much to my liking.[1] As I did not want to trench upon his Excellency for money or anything of that sort, I had brought with me from France two jewels, with which I begged him to purchase me the house, and to keep them until I earned it with my labour. These jewels were excellently executed by my workmen, after my own designs. When he had inspected them with minute attention, he uttered these spirited words, which clothed my soul with a false hope: "Take back your jewels, Benvenuto! I want you, and not them; you shall have your house free of charges." After this, he signed a rescript underneath the petition I had drawn up, and which I have always preserved among my papers. The rescript ran as follows: "*Let the house be seen to, and who is the vendor, and at what price; for we wish to comply with Benvenuto's request.*"[2]

[1] *This house is in the Via del Rosaio, entered from Via della Pergola, No. 6527.*

[2] *The petition and the rescript are in existence, and confirm Cellini's veracity in this transaction. See Bianchi, p. 587.*

I naturally thought that this would secure me in possession of the house; being over and above convinced that my performances must far exceed what I promised.

His Excellency committed the execution of these orders to his majordomo, who was named Ser Pier Francesco Riccio.[1] The man came from Prato, and had been the Duke's pedagogue. I talked, then, to this donkey, and described my requirements, for there was a garden adjoining the house, on which I wanted to erect a workshop. He handed the matter over to a paymaster, dry and meagre, who bore the name of Lattanzio Gorini. This flimsy little fellow, with his tiny spider's hands and small gnat's voice, moved about the business at a snail's pace; yet in an evil hour he sent me stones, sand, and lime enough to build perhaps a pigeon-house with careful management. When I saw how coldly things were going forward, I began to feel dismayed; however, I said to myself: "Little beginnings sometimes have great endings;" and I fostered hope in my heart by noticing how many thousand ducats had recently been squandered upon ugly pieces of bad sculpture turned out by that beast of a Buaccio Bandinelli.[2] So I rallied my spirits and kept prodding at Lattanzio Gorini, to make him go a little faster. It was like shouting to a pack of lame donkeys with a blind dwarf for their driver. Under these difficulties, and by the use of my own money, I had soon marked out the foundations

[1] *Varchi, St. Fior., lib. xv. 44, gives to this man the character of a presumptuous conceited simpleton.*

[2] *Cellini calls this man, his bitter foe and rival, Buaccio or the great ox, blockhead, instead of Baccio, which is shortened for Bartolommeo.*

of the workshop and cleared the ground of trees and vines, labouring on, according to my wont, with fire, and perhaps a trifle of impatience.

On the other side, I was in the hands of Tasso the carpenter, a great friend of mine, who had received my instructions for making a wooden framework to set up the Perseus. This Tasso was a most excellent craftsman, the best, I believe, who ever lived in his own branch of art.[1] Personally, he was gay and merry by temperament; and whenever I went to see him, he met me laughing, with some little song in falsetto on his lips. Half in despair as I then was, news coming that my affairs in France were going wrong, and these in Florence promising but ill through the lukewarmness of my patron, I could never stop listening till half the song was finished; and so in the end I used to cheer up a little with my friend, and drove away, as well as I was able, some few of the gloomy thoughts which weighed upon me.

LV

I had got all the above-mentioned things in order, and was making vigorous preparations for my great undertaking—indeed a portion of the lime had been already used—when I received sudden notice to appear before the majordomo. I found him, after his Excellency's dinner, in the hall of the clock.[2] On entering, I paid him marked respect, and he received me

[1] *See Vol. I., p.* 100. *Vasari introduced him, together with Cosimo's other favoured artists, in a fresco of the Palazzo Vecchio at Florence. See Plon, p.* 124.

[2] *One of the rooms in the Palazzo Vecchio, so called because the famous cosmographical timepiece, made about* 1484 *for Lorenzo de' Medici by Lorenzo della Volpaia, stood there.*

with the greatest stiffness. Then he asked who had installed me in the house, and by whose authority I had begun to build there, saying he marvelled much that I had been so headstrong and foolhardy. I answered that I had been installed in the house by his Excellency, and that his lordship himself, in the name of his Excellency, had given the orders to Lattanzio Gorini. "Lattanzio brought stone, sand, and lime, and provided what I wanted, saying he did so at your lordship's orders." When I had thus spoken, the brute turned upon me with still greater tartness, vowing that neither I nor any of those whom I had mentioned spoke the truth. This stung me to the quick, and I exclaimed: "O majordomo, so long as your lordship[1] chooses to use language befitting the high office which you hold, I shall revere you, and speak to you as respectfully as I do to the Duke; if you take another line with me, I shall address you as but one Ser Pier Francesco Riccio." He flew into such a rage that I thought he meant to go mad upon the spot, anticipating the time ordained by Heaven for him to do so.[2] Pouring forth a torrent of abuse, he roared out that he was surprised at himself for having let me speak at all to a man of his quality. Thereupon my blood was up, and I cried: "Mark my words, then, Ser Pier Francesco Riccio! I will tell you what sort of men are my equals, and who are yours—mere teachers of the alphabet to children!" His face con-

[1] *It was the custom at that epoch to address princes by the title of Signore or Vostra Signoria; gentlemen (armigeri) had the title of Messer; simple Ser was given to plebeians with some civil or ecclesiastical dignity.*

[2] *Vasari, in his Life of Montorsoli, says in effect that this Riccio died about* 1559, *after having been insane several years.*

tracted with a spasm, while he raised his voice and repeated the same words in a still more insulting tone. I, too, assumed an air of menace, and matching his own arrogance with something of the same sort, told him plainly that men of my kind were worthy to converse with popes and emperors, and great kings, and that perhaps there were not two such men alive upon this earth, while ten of his sort might be met at every doorway. On hearing these words he jumped upon a window-seat in the hall there, and defied me to repeat what I had said. I did so with still greater heat and spirit, adding I had no farther mind to serve the Duke, and that I should return to France, where I was always welcome. The brute remained there stupefied and pale as clay; I went off furious, resolved on leaving Florence; and would to God that I had done so!

The Duke cannot, I think, have been informed at once of this diabolical scene, for I waited several days without hearing from him. Giving up all thoughts of Florence, except what concerned the settlement of my sister's and nieces' affairs, I made preparations to provide for them as well as I could with the small amount of money I had brought, and then to return to France and never set my foot in Italy again. This being my firm purpose, I had no intention to ask leave of the Duke or anybody, but to decamp as quickly as I could; when one morning the majordomo, of his own accord, sent very humbly to entreat my presence, and opened a long pedantic oration, in which I could discover neither method, nor elegance, nor meaning, nor head, nor tail. I only gathered from it that he

professed himself a good Christian, wished to bear no man malice, and asked me in the Duke's name what salary I should be willing to accept. Hearing this, I stood awhile on guard, and made no answer, being firmly resolved not to engage myself. When he saw that I refused to reply, he had at least the cleverness to put in: "Benvenuto, dukes expect to be answered; and what I am saying to you, I am saying from his Excellency's lips." Then I rejoined that if the message came from his Excellency, I would gladly reply, and told him to report to the Duke that I could not accept a position inferior to that of any one employed by him as artist. The majordomo answered: "Bandinelli receives two hundred crowns a year; if then you are contented with that, your salary is settled." I agreed upon these terms, adding that what I might earn in addition by the merit of my performances, could be given after they were seen; that point I left entirely to the good judgment of his Excellency. Thus, then, against my will, I pieced the broken thread again, and set to work; the Duke continually treating me with the highest imaginable marks of favour.

LVI

I received frequent letters from France, written by my most faithful friend Messer Guido Guidi. As yet they told nothing but good news; and Ascanio also bade me enjoy myself without uneasiness, since, if anything happened, he would let me know at once.

Now the King was informed that I had commenced working for the Duke of Florence, and being the

best man in the world, he often asked: "Why does not Benvenuto come back to us?" He put searching questions on the subject to my two workmen, both of whom replied that I kept writing I was well off where I was, adding they thought I did not want to re-enter the service of his Majesty. Incensed by these presumptuous words, which were none of my saying, the King exclaimed: "Since he left us without any cause, I shall not recall him; let him e'en stay where he is." Thus the thievish brigands brought matters exactly to the pass they desired; for if I had returned to France, they would have become mere workmen under me once more, whereas, while I remained away, they were their own masters and in my place; consequently, they did everything in their power to prevent my coming back.

LVII

While the workshop for executing my Perseus was in building, I used to work in a ground-floor room. Here I modelled the statue in plaster, giving it the same dimensions as the bronze was meant to have, and intending to cast it from this mould. But finding that it would take rather long to carry it out in this way, I resolved upon another expedient, especially as now a wretched little studio had been erected, brick on brick, so miserably built that the mere recollection of it gives me pain. So then I began the figure of Medusa, and constructed the skeleton in iron. Afterwards I put on the clay, and when that was modelled, baked it.

I had no assistants except some little shopboys,

among whom was one of great beauty; he was the son of a prostitute called La Gambetta. I made use of the lad as a model, for the only books which teach this art are the natural human body. Meanwhile, as I could not do everything alone, I looked about for workmen in order to put the business quickly through; but I was unable to find any. There were indeed some in Florence who would willingly have come, but Bandinello prevented them, and after keeping me in want of aid awhile, told the Duke that I was trying to entice his work-people because I was quite incapable of setting up so great a statue by myself. I complained to the Duke of the annoyance which the brute gave me, and begged him to allow me some of the labourers from the Opera.[1] My request inclined him to lend ear to Bandinello's calumnies; and when I noticed that, I set about to do my utmost by myself alone. The labour was enormous: I had to strain every muscle night and day; and just then the husband of my sister sickened, and died after a few days' illness. He left my sister, still young, with six girls of all ages, on my hands. This was the first great trial I endured in Florence, to be made the father and guardian of such a distressed family.

LVIII

In my anxiety that nothing should go wrong, I sent for two hand-labourers to clear my garden of rubbish. They came from Ponte Vecchio, the one an old man of sixty years, the other a young fellow of

[1] *That is, the Opera del Duomo, or permanent establishment for attending to the fabric of the Florentine Cathedral.*

eighteen. After employing them about three days, the lad told me that the old man would not work, and that I had better send him away, since, beside being idle, he prevented his comrade from working. The little I had to do there could be done by himself, without throwing money away on other people. The youth was called Bernardino Mannellini, of Mugello. When I saw that he was so inclined to labour, I asked whether he would enter my service, and we agreed upon the spot. He groomed my horse, gardened, and soon essayed to help me in the workshop, with such success that by degrees he learned the art quite nicely. I never had a better assistant than he proved. Having made up my mind to accomplish the whole affair with this man's aid, I now let the Duke know that Bandinello was lying, and that I could get on famously without his work-people.

Just at this time I suffered slightly in the loins, and being unable to work hard, I was glad to pass my time in the Duke's wardrobe with a couple of young goldsmiths called Gianpagolo and Domenico Poggini,[1] who made a little golden cup under my direction. It was chased in bas-relief with figures and other pretty ornaments, and his Excellency meant it for the Duchess to drink water out of. He furthermore commissioned me to execute a golden belt, which I enriched with gems and delicate masks and other fancies. The Duke came frequently into the wardrobe, and took great pleasure in watching me at work and talking to me. When my health im-

[1] *These two brothers were specially eminent as die-casters. Gianpagolo went to Spain, and served Philip II.*

proved, I had clay brought, and took a portrait of his Excellency, considerably larger than life-size, which I modelled while he stayed with me for pastime. He was highly delighted with this piece, and conceived such a liking for me that he earnestly begged me to take up my working quarters in the palace, selecting rooms large enough for my purpose, and fitting them up with furnaces and all I wanted, for he greatly enjoyed watching the processes of art. I replied that this was impossible; I should not have finished my undertakings in a hundred years.

LIX

The Duchess also treated me with extraordinary graciousness, and would have been pleased if I had worked for her alone, forgetting Perseus and everything besides. I for my part, while these vain favours were being showered upon me, knew only too well that my perverse and biting fortune could not long delay to send me some fresh calamity, because I kept ever before my eyes the great mistake I had committed while seeking to do a good action. I refer to my affairs in France. The King could not swallow the displeasure he felt at my departure; and yet he wanted me to return, if only this could be brought about without concessions on his part. I thought that I was entirely in the right, and would not bend submissively, because I judged that if I wrote in humble terms, those enemies of mine would say in their French fashion that I had confessed myself to blame, and that certain misdoings with which they wrong-

fully taxed me were proved true. Therefore I stood upon my honour, and wrote in terms of haughty coldness, which was precisely what those two traitors, my apprentices, most heartily desired. In my letters to them I boasted of the distinguished kindness shown me in my own birthplace by a prince and princess the absolute masters of Florence. Whenever they received one of these despatches, they went to the King, and besieged his Majesty with entreaties for the castle upon the same terms as he had granted it to me. The King, who was a man of great goodness and perspicacity, would never consent to the presumptuous demands of those scoundrels, since he scented the malignity of their aims. Yet, wishing to keep them in expectation, and to give me the opportunity of coming back, he caused an angry letter to be written to me by his treasurer, Messer Giuliano Buonaccorsi, a burgher of Florence. The substance was as follows: If I wanted to preserve the reputation for honesty which I had hitherto enjoyed, it was my plain duty, after leaving France with no cause whatsoever, to render an account of all that I had done and dealt with for his Majesty.

The receipt of this letter gave me such pleasure that, if I had consulted my own palate, I could not have wished for either more or less. I sat down to write an answer, and filled nine pages of ordinary paper. In this document I described in detail all the works which I had executed, and all the adventures I had gone through while performing them, and all the sums which had been spent upon them. The payments had always been made through two notaries

and one of his Majesty's treasurers; and I could show receipts from all the men into whose hands they passed, whether for goods supplied or labour rendered. I had not pocketed one penny of the money, nor had I received any reward for my completed works. I brought back with me into Italy nothing but some marks of favour and most royal promises, truly worthy of his Majesty. "Now, though I cannot vaunt myself of any recompense beyond the salaries appointed for my maintenance in France, seven hundred golden crowns of which are still due, inasmuch as I abstained from drawing them until I could employ them on my return-journey; yet knowing that malicious foes out of their envious hearts have played some knavish trick against me, I feel confident that truth will prevail. I take pride in his Most Christian Majesty, and am not moved by avarice. I am indeed aware of having performed for him far more than I undertook; and albeit the promised reward has not been given me, my one anxiety is to remain in his Majesty's opinion that man of probity and honour which I have always been. If your Majesty entertains the least doubt upon this point, I will fly to render an account of my conduct, at the risk even of my life. But noticing in what slight esteem I am held, I have had no mind to come back and make an offer of myself, knowing that I shall never lack for bread whithersoever I may go. If, however, I am called for, I will always answer." The letter contained many further particulars worthy of the King's attention, and proper to the preservation of my honour. Before despatching it, I took it to the Duke,

who read it with interest; then I sent it into France, addressed to the Cardinal of Ferrara.

LX

About this time Bernardone Baldini,[1] broker in jewels to the Duke, brought a big diamond from Venice, which weighed more than thirty-five carats. Antonio, son of Vittorio Landi, was also interested in getting the Duke to purchase it.[2] The stone had been cut with a point; but since it did not yield the purity of lustre which one expects in such a diamond, its owners had cropped the point, and, in truth, it was not exactly fit for either point or table cutting.[3] Our Duke, who greatly delighted in gems, though he was not a sound judge of them, held out good hopes to the rogue Bernardaccio that he would buy this stone; and the fellow, wanting to secure for himself alone the honour of palming it off upon the Duke of Florence, abstained from taking his partner Antonio Landi into the secret. Now Landi had been my intimate friend from childhood, and when he saw that I enjoyed the Duke's confidence, he called me aside (it was just before noon, at a corner of the Mercato Nuovo), and spoke as follows: "Benvenuto, I am convinced that the Duke will show you a diamond, which he seems disposed to buy; you will find it a big stone. Pray assist the purchase; I can give it for seventeen thousand crowns. I feel

[1] *Varchi and Ammirato both mention him as an excellent jeweller.*

[2] *Antonio Landi was a Florentine gentleman, merchant, and author. A comedy of his called Commodo is extant.*

[3] *Italians distinguished cut diamonds of three sorts: in tavola, a faccette, and in punta. The word I have translated "cropped" is ischericato, which was properly applied to an unfrocked or degraded ecclesiastic.*

sure he will ask your advice; and if you see that he has a mind for it, we will contrive that he secures it." Antonio professed great confidence in being able to complete the bargain for the jewel at that price. In reply, I told him that if my advice was taken, I would speak according to my judgment, without prejudice to the diamond.

As I have above related, the Duke came daily into our goldsmith's workshop for several hours; and about a week after this conversation with Antonio Landi he showed me one day after dinner the diamond in question, which I immediately recognised by its description, both as to form and weight. I have already said that its water was not quite transparent, for which reason it had been cropped; so, when I found it of that kind and quality, I felt certainly disinclined to recommend its acquisition. However, I asked his Excellency what he wanted me to say; because it was one thing for jewellers to value a stone after a prince had bought it, and another thing to estimate it with a view to purchase. He replied that he had bought it, and that he only wanted my opinion. I did not choose to abstain from hinting what I really thought about the stone. Then he told me to observe the beauty of its great facets.[1] I answered that this feature of the diamond was not so great a beauty as his Excellency supposed, but came from the point having been cropped. At these words my prince, who perceived that I was speaking the truth, made a wry face, and bade me give good heed to valuing the stone, and saying what I thought it worth. I reckoned that, since Landi had

[1] *Filetti, the sharp lines which divide one facet from another.*

offered it to me for 17,000 crowns, the Duke might have got it for 15,000 at the highest; so, noticing that he would take it ill if I spoke the truth, I made my mind up to uphold him in his false opinion, and handing back the diamond, said: "You will probably have paid 18,000 crowns." On hearing this the Duke uttered a loud "Oh!" opening his mouth as wide as a well, and cried out: "Now am I convinced that you understand nothing about the matter." I retorted: "You are certainly in the wrong there, my lord. Do you attend to maintaining the credit of your diamond, while I attend to understanding my trade. But pray tell me at least how much you paid, in order that I may learn to understand it according to the way of your Excellency." The Duke rose, and, with a little sort of angry grin, replied: "Twenty-five thousand crowns and more, Benvenuto, did that stone cost me!"

Having thus spoken, he departed. Giovanpagolo and Domenico Poggini, the goldsmiths, were present; and Bàchiacca, the embroiderer, who was working in an adjacent room, ran up at the noise.[1] I told them that I should never have advised the Duke to purchase it; but if his heart was set on having it, Antonio Landi had offered me the stone eight days ago for 17,000 crowns. I think I could have got it for 15,000 or less. But the Duke apparently wishes to maintain his gem in credit; for when Antonio Landi was willing to let it go at that price, how the devil can Bernardone have played off such a shameful trick

[1] *Antonio Ubertini, called Il Bachiacca, a brother of Cellini's friend in Rome. See Vol. I., p. 146. He enjoyed a great reputation, and was praised by Varchi in a sonnet for his mastery of embroidery.*

upon his Excellency? Never imagining that the matter stood precisely as the Duke averred, we laughingly made light of his supposed credulity.

LXI

Meanwhile I was advancing with my great statue of Medusa. I had covered the iron skeleton with clay, which I modelled like an anatomical subject, and about half an inch thinner than the bronze would be. This I baked well, and then began to spread on the wax surface, in order to complete the figure to my liking.[1] The Duke, who often came to inspect it, was so anxious lest I should not succeed with the bronze, that he wanted me to call in some master to cast it for me.

He was continually talking in the highest terms of my acquirements and accomplishments. This made his majordomo no less continually eager to devise some trap for making me break my neck. Now his post at court gave him authority with the chief-constables and all the offices in the poor unhappy town of Florence. Only to think that a fellow from Prato, our hereditary foeman, the son of a cooper, and the most ignorant creature in existence, should have risen to such a station of influence, merely because he had been the rotten tutor of Cosimo de' Medici before he became Duke! Well, as I have said, he kept ever on

[1] *This is an important passage, which has not, I think, been properly understood by Cellini's translators. It describes the process he now employed in preparing a mould for bronze-casting. First, it seems, he made a solid clay model, somewhat smaller than the bronze was meant to be. This he overlaid with wax, and then took a hollow mould of the figure thus formed. Farther on we shall see how he withdrew the wax from the hollow mould, leaving the solid model inside, with space enough between them for the metal to flow in.*

the watch to serve me some ill turn; and finding that he could not catch me out on any side, he fell at last upon this plan, which meant mischief. He betook himself to Gambetta, the mother of my apprentice Cencio; and this precious pair together—that knave of a pedant and that rogue of a strumpet—invented a scheme for giving me such a fright as would make me leave Florence in hot haste. Gambetta, yielding to the instinct of her trade, went out, acting under the orders of that mad, knavish pedant, the majordomo—I must add that they had also gained over the Bargello, a Bolognese, whom the Duke afterwards dismissed for similar conspiracies. Well, one Saturday evening, after sunset, Gambetta came to my house with her son, and told me she had kept him several days indoors for my welfare. I answered that there was no reason to keep him shut up on my account; and laughing her whorish arts to scorn, I turned to the boy in her presence, and said these words: "You know, Cencio, whether I have sinned with you!" He began to shed tears, and answered, "No!" Upon this the mother, shaking her head, cried out at him: "Ah! you little scoundrel! Do you think I do not know how these things happen?" Then she turned to me, and begged me to keep the lad hidden in my house, because the Bargello was after him, and would seize him anywhere outside my house, but there they would not dare to touch him. I made answer that in my house lived my widowed sister and six girls of holy life, and that I wanted nobody else there. Upon that she related that the majordomo had given orders to the Bargello, and that I should certainly be taken

up: only, if I would not harbour her son, I might square accounts by paying her a hundred crowns; the majordomo was her crony, and I might rest assured that she could work him to her liking, provided I paid down the hundred crowns. This cozenage goaded me into such a fury that I cried: "Out with you, shameful strumpet! Were it not for my good reputation, and for the innocence of this unhappy boy of yours here, I should long ago have cut your throat with the dagger at my side; and twice or thrice I have already clasped my fingers on the handle." With words to this effect, and many ugly blows to boot, I drove the woman and her son into the street.

LXII

When I reflected on the roguery and power of that evil-minded pedant, I judged it best to give a wide berth to his infernal machinations; so early next morning I mounted my horse and took the road for Venice, leaving in my sister's hands jewels and articles to the value of nearly two thousand crowns. I took with me my servant Bernardino of Mugello; and when I reached Ferrara, I wrote word to his Excellency the Duke, that though I had gone off without being sent, I should come back again without being called for.

On arriving at Venice, and pondering upon the divers ways my cruel fortune took to torment me, yet at the same time feeling myself none the less sound in health and hearty, I made up my mind to fence with her according to my wont. While thus engrossed in thoughts about my own affairs, I went abroad for pastime through that beautiful and sumptuous city, and

TITIAN
(BY HIMSELF)

paid visits to the admirable painter Titian, and to Jacopo del Sansovino, our able sculptor and architect from Florence. The latter enjoyed an excellent appointment under the Signoria of Venice; and we had been acquainted during our youth in Rome and Florence. These two men of genius received me with marked kindness. The day afterwards I met Messer Lorenzo de' Medici,[1] who took me by the hand at once, giving me the warmest welcome which could be imagined, because we had known each other in Florence when I was coining for Duke Alessandro, and afterwards in Paris while I was in the King's service. At that time he sojourned in the house of Messer Giuliano Buonaccorsi, and having nowhere else to go for pastime without the greatest peril of his life, he used to spend a large part of the day in my house, watching me working at the great pieces I produced there. As I was saying, our former acquaintance led him to take me by the hand and bring me to his dwelling, where I found the Prior degli Strozzi, brother of my lord Piero. While making good cheer together, they asked me how long I intended to remain in Venice, thinking that I was on my return journey into France. To these gentlemen I replied that I had left Florence on account of the events I have described above, and that I meant to go back after two or three days, in order to resume my service with the Duke. On hearing this, the Prior and Messer Lorenzo turned round on me with such sternness that I felt extremely uneasy; then they said to me: "You would

[1] *This is Lorenzino de' Medici, the murderer of Alessandro, who was himself assassinated by two Tuscan bravi in* 1548. *See Renaissance in Italy, vol. vi. chap.* 6.

do far better to return to France, where you are rich and well known; for if you go back to Florence, you will lose all that you have gained in France, and will earn nothing there but annoyances."

I made no answer to these words, and departed the next day as secretly as I was able, turning my face again towards Florence. In the meanwhile that infernal plot had come to a head and broken, for I had written to my great master, the Duke, giving him a full account of the causes of my escapade to Venice. I went to visit him without any ceremony, and was received with his usual reserve and austerity. Having maintained this attitude awhile, he turned toward me pleasantly, and asked where I had been. I answered that my heart had never moved one inch from his most illustrious Excellency, although some weighty reasons had forced me to go a-roaming for a little while. Then softening still more in manner, he began to question me concerning Venice, and after this wise we conversed some space of time. At last he bade me apply myself to business, and complete his Perseus. So I returned home glad and light-hearted, and comforted my family, that is to say, my sister and her six daughters. Then I resumed my work, and pushed it forward as briskly as I could.

LXIII

The first piece I cast in bronze was that great bust, the portrait of his Excellency, which I had modelled in the goldsmith's workroom while suffering from those pains in my back.[1] It gave much pleasure when

[1] *Now in the Museum of the Bargello Palace at Florence.*

it was completed, though my sole object in making it was to obtain experience of clays suitable for bronze-casting. I was of course aware that the admirable sculptor Donatello had cast his bronzes with the clay of Florence; yet it seemed to me that he had met with enormous difficulties in their execution. As I thought that this was due to some fault in the earth, I wanted to make these first experiments before I undertook my Perseus. From them I learned that the clay was good enough, but had not been well understood by Donatello, inasmuch as I could see that his pieces had been cast with the very greatest trouble. Accordingly, as I have described above, I prepared the earth by artificial methods, and found it serve me well, and with it I cast the bust; but since I had not yet constructed my own furnace, I employed that of Maestro Zanobi di Pagno, a bell-founder.

When I saw that this bust came out sharp and clean, I set at once to construct a little furnace in the workshop erected for me by the Duke, after my own plans and design, in the house which the Duke had given me. No sooner was the furnace ready than I went to work with all diligence upon the casting of Medusa, that is, the woman twisted in a heap beneath the feet of Perseus. It was an extremely difficult task, and I was anxious to observe all the niceties of art which I had learned, so as not to lapse into some error. The first cast I took in my furnace succeeded in the superlative degree, and was so clean that my friends thought I should not need to retouch it. It is true that certain Germans and Frenchmen, who vaunt the possession of marvellous secrets, pretend that they can

cast bronzes without retouching them; but this is really nonsense, because the bronze, when it has first been cast, ought to be worked over and beaten in with hammers and chisels, according to the manner of the ancients and also to that of the moderns—I mean such moderns as have known how to work in bronze.

The result of this casting greatly pleased his Excellency, who often came to my house to inspect it, encouraging me by the interest he showed to do my best. The furious envy of Bandinello, however, who kept always whispering in the Duke's ears, had such effect that he made him believe my first successes with a single figure or two proved nothing; I should never be able to put the whole large piece together, since I was new to the craft, and his Excellency ought to take good heed he did not throw his money away. These insinuations operated so efficiently upon the Duke's illustrious ears, that part of my allowance for work-people was withdrawn. I felt compelled to complain pretty sharply to his Excellency; and having gone to wait on him one morning in the Via de' Servi, I spoke as follows: "My lord, I do not now receive the moneys necessary for my task, which makes me fear that your Excellency has lost confidence in me. Once more then I tell you that I feel quite able to execute this statue three times better than the model, as I have before engaged my word."

LXIV

I could see that this speech made no impression on the Duke, for he kept silence; then, seized with sud-

den anger and a vehement emotion, I began again to address him: "My lord, this city of a truth has ever been the school of the most noble talents. Yet when a man has come to know what he is worth, after gaining some acquirements, and wishing to augment the glory of his town and of his glorious prince, it is quite right that he should go and labour elsewhere. To prove the truth of these words, I need only remind your Excellency of Donatello and the great Lionardo da Vinci in the past, and of our incomparable Michel Angelo Buonarroti in the present; they augment the glory of your Excellency by their genius. I in my turn feel the same desire and hope to play my part like them; therefore, my lord, give me the leave to go. But beware of letting Bandinello quit you; rather bestow upon him always more than he demands; for if he goes into foreign parts, his ignorance is so presumptuous that he is just the man to disgrace our most illustrious school. Now grant me my permission, prince! I ask no further reward for my labours up to this time than the gracious favour of your most illustrious Excellency." When he saw the firmness of my resolution, he turned with some irritation and exclaimed: "Benvenuto, if you want to finish the statue, you shall lack for nothing." Then I thanked him and said I had no greater desire than to show those envious folk that I had it in me to execute the promised work. When I left his Excellency, I received some slight assistance; but this not being sufficient, I had to put my hand into my own purse, in order to push the work forward at something better than a snail's pace.

It was my custom to pass the evening in the Duke's wardrobe, where Domenico Poggini and his brother Gianpagolo were at work upon that golden cup for the Duchess and the girdle I have already described. His Excellency had also commissioned me to make a little model for a pendant to set the great diamond which Bernardone and Antonio Landi made him buy. I tried to get out of doing it, but the Duke compelled me by all sorts of kindly pressure to work until four hours after nightfall. He kept indeed enticing me to push this job forward by daytime also; but I would not consent, although I felt sure I should incur his anger. Now one evening I happened to arrive rather later than usual, whereupon he said: "Ill come may you be!"[1] I answered: "My lord, that is not my name; my name is Welcome! But, as I suppose your Excellency is joking, I will add no more." He replied that, far from joking, he meant solemn earnest. I had better look to my conduct, for it had come to his ears that I relied upon his favour to take in first one man and then another. I begged his most illustrious Excellency to name a single person whom I had ever taken in. At this he flew into a rage, and said: "Go, and give back to Bernardone what you have of his. There! I have mentioned one." I said: "My lord, I thank you, and beg you to condescend so far as to listen to four words. It is true that he lent me a pair of old scales, two anvils, and three little hammers, which articles I begged his workman, Giorgio da Cortona, fifteen days ago, to fetch back. Giorgio came for them himself. If your Excellency can prove, on re-

[1] *A play on Benvenuto and Malvenuto.*

ferring to those who have spoken these calumnies, or to others, that I have ever, from the day of my birth till now, got any single thing by fraud from anybody, be it in Rome or be it in France, then let your Excellency punish me as immoderately as you choose." When the Duke saw me in this mighty passion, he assumed the air of a prudent and benevolent lord, saying: "Those words are not meant for well-doers; therefore, if it is as you say, I shall always receive you with the same kindness as heretofore." To this I answered: "I should like your Excellency to know that the rascalities of Bernardone compel me to ask as a favour how much that big diamond with the cropped point cost you. I hope to prove on what account that scoundrel tries to bring me into disgrace." Then his Excellency replied: "I paid 25,000 ducats for it; why do you ask me?" "Because, my lord, on such a day, at such an hour, in a corner of Mercato Nuovo, Antonio Landi, the son of Vittorio, begged me to induce your Excellency to buy it, and at my first question he asked 16,000 ducats for the diamond;[1] now your Excellency knows what it has cost you. Domenico Poggini and Gianpagolo his brother, who are present, will confirm my words; for I spoke to them at once about it, and since that time have never once alluded to the matter, because your Excellency told me I did not understand these things, which made me think you wanted to keep up the credit of your stone. I should like you to know, my lord, that I do understand, and that, as regards my

[1] *He forgets that he has said above that it was offered him by Landi for* 17,000 *ducats.*

character, I consider myself no less honest than any man who ever lived upon this earth. I shall not try to rob you of eight or ten thousand ducats at one go, but shall rather seek to earn them by my industry. I entered the service of your Excellency as sculptor, goldsmith, and stamper of coin; but to blab about my neighbour's private matters,—never! What I am now telling you I say in self-defence; I do not want my fee for information.[1] If I speak out in the presence of so many worthy fellows as are here, it is because I do not wish your Excellency to believe what Bernardone tells you."

When he had heard this speech, the Duke rose up in anger, and sent for Bernardone, who was forced to take flight as far as Venice, he and Antonio Landi with him. The latter told me that he had not meant that diamond, but was talking of another stone. So then they went and came again from Venice; whereupon I presented myself to the Duke and spoke as follows: "My lord, what I told you is the truth; and what Bernardone said about the tools he lent me is a lie. You had better put this to the proof, and I will go at once to the Bargello." The Duke made answer: "Benvenuto, do your best to be an honest man, as you have done until now; you have no cause for apprehension." So the whole matter passed off in smoke, and I heard not one more word about it. I applied myself to finishing his jewel; and when I took it to the Duchess, her Grace said that she esteemed my setting quite as highly as the diamond which Ber-

[1] *This fee was "il quarto," or the fourth part of the criminal's fine, which came to the delator.*

nardaccio had made them buy. She then desired me to fasten it upon her breast, and handed me a large pin, with which I fixed it, and took my leave in her good favour.[1] Afterwards I was informed that they had the stone reset by a German or some other foreigner—whether truly or not I cannot vouch—upon Bernardone's suggestion that the diamond would show better in a less elaborate setting.

LXV

I believe I have already narrated how Domenico and Giovanpagolo Poggini, goldsmiths and brothers, were at work in the Duke's wardrobe upon some little golden vases, after my design, chased with figures in bas-relief, and other ornaments of great distinction. I oftentimes kept saying to his Excellency: "My lord, if you will undertake to pay some workpeople, I am ready to strike coins for your mint and medals with your portrait. I am willing to enter into competition with the ancients, and feel able to surpass them; for since those early days in which I made the medals of Pope Clement, I have learned so much that I can now produce far better pieces of the kind. I think I can also outdo the coins I struck for Duke Alessandro, which are still held in high esteem; in like manner I could make for you large pieces of gold and silver plate, as I did so often for that noble monarch, King Francis of France, thanks to the great conveniences he allowed me, without ever losing time for the execution of colossal statues or other

[1] *It is worthy of notice that from this point onward the MS. is written by Cellini in his own hand.*

works of the sculptor's craft." To this suggestion the Duke replied: "Go forward; I will see;" but he never supplied me with conveniences or aid of any kind.

One day his most illustrious Excellency handed me several pounds weight of silver, and said: "This is some of the silver from my mines;[1] take it, and make a fine vase." Now I did not choose to neglect my Perseus, and at the same time I wished to serve the Duke, so I entrusted the metal, together with my designs and models in wax, to a rascal called Piero di Martino, a goldsmith by trade. He set the work up badly, and moreover ceased to labour at it, so that I lost more time than if I had taken it in hand myself. After several months were wasted, and Piero would neither work nor put men to work upon the piece, I made him give it back. I moved heaven and earth to get back the body of the vase, which he had begun badly, as I have already said, together with the remainder of the silver. The Duke, hearing something of these disputes, sent for the vase and the models, and never told me why or wherefore. Suffice it to say, that he placed some of my designs in the hands of divers persons at Venice and elsewhere, and was very ill served by them.

The Duchess kept urging me to do goldsmith's work for her. I frequently replied that everybody, nay, all Italy, knew well I was an excellent goldsmith; but Italy had not yet seen what I could do in sculpture. Among artists, certain enraged sculptors laughed at me, and called me the new sculptor. "Now

[1] *Cosimo's silver mines were at Campiglia and Pietrasantra. He worked them, however, rather at a loss than profit.*

I hope to show them that I am an old sculptor, if God shall grant me the boon of finishing my Perseus for that noble piazza of his most illustrious Excellency." After this I shut myself up at home, working day and night, not even showing my face in the palace. I wished, however, to keep myself in favour with the Duchess; so I got some little cups made for her in silver, no larger than twopenny milk-pots, chased with exquisite masks in the rarest antique style. When I took them to her Excellency, she received me most graciously, and repaid the gold and silver I had spent upon them. Then I made my suit to her and prayed her tell the Duke that I was getting small assistance for so great a work; I begged her also to warn him not to lend so ready an ear to Bandinello's evil tongue, which hindered me from finishing my Perseus. In reply to these lamentable complaints the Duchess shrugged her shoulders and exclaimed: "Of a surety the Duke ought only too well to know that this Bandinello of his is worth nothing."

LXVI

I now stayed at home, and went rarely to the palace, labouring with great diligence to complete my statue. I had to pay the workmen out of my own pocket; for the Duke, after giving Lattanzio Gorini orders to discharge their wages, at the end of about eighteen months, grew tired, and withdrew his subsidy. I asked Lattanzio why he did not pay me as usual. The man replied, gesticulating with those spidery hands of his, in a shrill gnat's voice: "Why do not you finish your

work? One thinks that you will never get it done." In a rage I up and answered: "May the plague catch you and all who dare to think I shall not finish it!"

So I went home with despair at heart to my unlucky Perseus, not without weeping, when I remembered the prosperity I had abandoned in Paris under the patronage of that marvellous King Francis, where I had abundance of all kinds, and here had everything to want for. Many a time I had it in my soul to cast myself away for lost. One day on one of these occasions, I mounted a nice nag I had, put a hundred crowns in my purse, and went to Fiesole to visit a natural son of mine there, who was at nurse with my gossip, the wife of one of my work-people. When I reached the house, I found the boy in good health, and kissed him, very sad at heart. On taking leave, he would not let me go, but held me with his little hands and a tempest of cries and tears. Considering that he was only two years old or thereabouts, the child's grief was something wonderful. Now I had resolved, in the heat of my despair, if I met Bandinello, who went every evening to a farm of his above San Domenico, that I would hurl him to destruction; so I disengaged myself from my baby, and left the boy there sobbing his heart out. Taking the road toward Florence, just when I entered the piazza of San Domenico, Bandinello was arriving from the other side. On the instant I decided upon bloodshed; but when I reached the man and raised my eyes, I saw him unarmed, riding a sorry mule or rather donkey, and he had with him a boy of ten years old. No sooner did he catch sight of me than he turned the colour of a corpse, and trem-

bled from head to foot. Perceiving at once how base the business would be, I exclaimed: "Fear not, vile coward! I do not condescend to smite you." He looked at me submissively and said nothing. Thereupon I recovered command of my faculties, and thanked God that His goodness had withheld me from so great an act of violence. Then, being delivered from that fiendish fury, my spirits rose, and I said to myself: "If God but grant me to execute my work, I hope by its means to annihilate all my scoundrelly enemies; and thus I shall perform far greater and more glorious revenges than if I had vented my rage upon one single foe." Having this excellent resolve in heart, I reached my home. At the end of three days news was brought me that my only son had been smothered by his nurse, my gossip, which gave me greater grief than I have ever had in my whole life. However, I knelt upon the ground, and, not without tears, returned thanks to God, as I was wont, exclaiming, "Lord, Thou gavest me the child, and Thou hast taken him; for all Thy dealings I thank Thee with my whole heart." This great sorrow went nigh to depriving me of reason; yet, according to my habit, I made a virtue of necessity, and adapted myself to circumstances as well as I was able.

LXVII

About this time a young fellow called Francesco, the son of a smith, Matteo, left Bandinello's employment, and inquired whether I would give him work. I agreed, and sent him to retouch my Medusa, which had been new cast in bronze. After a fortnight he mentioned

that he had been speaking with his master, that is, Bandinello, who told him, if I cared to make a marble statue, he would give me a fine block of stone. I replied at once: "Tell him I accept his offer; perhaps this marble will prove a stumbling-block to him, for he keeps on provoking me, and does not bear in mind the great peril he ran upon the piazza of San Domenico. Tell him I will have the marble by all means. I never speak about him, and the beast is perpetually causing me annoyance. I verily believe you came to work here at his orders for the mere purpose of spying upon me. Go, then, and tell him I insist on having the marble, even against his will: see that you do not come back without it."

LXVIII

Many days had elapsed during which I had not shown my face in the palace, when the fancy took me to go there one morning just as the Duke was finishing his dinner. From what I heard, his Excellency had been talking of me that morning, commending me highly, and in particular praising my skill in setting jewels. Therefore, when the Duchess saw me, she called for me by Messer Sforza;[1] and on my presenting myself to her most illustrious Excellency, she asked me to set a little point-diamond in a ring, saying she wished always to wear it; at the same time she gave me the measure and the stone, which was worth about a hundred crowns, begging me to be quick about the work. Upon this the Duke began speaking

[1] *Sforza Almeni, a Perugian gentleman, the Duke's chamberlain. Cosimo killed this man with his own hand in the year* 1566.

to the Duchess, and said: "There is no doubt that Benvenuto was formerly without his peer in this art; but now that he has abandoned it, I believe it will be too much trouble for him to make a little ring of the sort you want. I pray you, therefore, not to importune him about this trifle, which would be no trifle to him owing to his want of practice." I thanked the Duke for his kind words, but begged him to let me render this trifling service to the Duchess. Then I took the ring in hand, and finished it within a few days. It was meant for the little finger; accordingly I fashioned four tiny children in the round and four masks, which figures composed the hoop. I also found room for some enamelled fruits and connecting links, so that the stone and setting went uncommonly well together. Then I took it to the Duchess, who told me graciously that I had produced a very fine piece, and that she would remember me. She afterwards sent the ring as a present to King Philip, and from that time forward kept charging me with commissions, so kindly, however, that I did my best to serve her, although I saw but very little of her money. God knows I had great need of that, for I was eager to finish my Perseus, and had engaged some journeymen, whom I paid out of my own purse. I now began to show myself more often than I had recently been doing.

LXIX

It happened on one feast-day that I went to the palace after dinner, and when I reached the clockroom, I saw the door of the wardrobe standing open. As I

drew nigh it, the Duke called me, and after a friendly greeting said: "You are welcome! Look at that box which has been sent me by my lord Stefano of Palestrina.[1] Open it, and let us see what it contains." When I had opened the box, I cried to the Duke: "My lord, this is a statue in Greek marble, and it is a miracle of beauty. I must say that I have never seen a boy's figure so excellently wrought and in so fine a style among all the antiques I have inspected. If your Excellency permits, I should like to restore it—head and arms and feet. I will add an eagle, in order that we may christen the lad Ganymede. It is certainly not my business to patch up statues, that being the trade of botchers, who do it in all conscience villainously ill; yet the art displayed by this great master of antiquity cries out to me to help him." The Duke was highly delighted to find the statue so beautiful, and put me a multitude of questions, saying: "Tell me, Benvenuto, minutely, in what consists the skill of this old master, which so excites your admiration." I then attempted, as well as I was able, to explain the beauty of workmanship, the consummate science, and the rare manner displayed by the fragment. I spoke long upon these topics, and with the greater pleasure because I saw that his Excellency was deeply interested.

LXX

While I was thus pleasantly engaged in entertaining the Duke, a page happened to leave the wardrobe,

[1] *Stefano Colonna, of the princely house of Palestrina. He was a general of considerable repute in the Spanish, French, and Florentine services successively.*

STEFANO COLONNA
(BRONZINO)

and at the same moment Bandinello entered. When the Duke saw him, his countenance contracted, and he asked him drily: "What are you about here?" Bandinello, without answering, cast a glance upon the box, where the statue lay uncovered. Then breaking into one of his malignant laughs and wagging his head, he turned to the Duke and said: "My lord, this exactly illustrates the truth of what I have so often told your Excellency. You must know that the ancients were wholly ignorant of anatomy, and therefore their works abound in mistakes." I kept silence, and paid no heed to what he was saying; nay, indeed, I had turned my back on him. But when the brute had brought his disagreeable babble to an end, the Duke exclaimed: "O Benvenuto, this is the exact opposite of what you were just now demonstrating with so many excellent arguments. Come and speak a word in defence of the statue." In reply to this appeal, so kindly made me by the Duke, I spoke as follows: "My lord, your most illustrious Excellency must please to know that Baccio Bandinello is made up of everything bad, and thus has he ever been; therefore, whatever he looks at, be the thing superlatively excellent, becomes in his ungracious eyes as bad as can be. I, who incline to the good only, discern the truth with purer senses. Consequently, what I told your Excellency about this lovely statue is mere simple truth; whereas what Bandinello said is but a portion of the evil out of which he is composed." The Duke listened with much amusement; but Bandinello writhed and made the most ugly faces—his face itself being by nature hideous beyond measure—which

could be imagined by the mind of man.

The Duke at this point moved away, and proceeded through some ground-floor rooms, while Bandinello followed. The chamberlains twitched me by the mantle, and sent me after; so we all attended the Duke until he reached a certain chamber, where he seated himself, with Bandinello and me standing at his right hand and his left. I kept silence, and the gentlemen of his Excellency's suite looked hard at Bandinello, tittering among themselves about the speech I had made in the room above. So then Bandinello began again to chatter, and cried out: "Prince, when I uncovered my Hercules and Cacus, I verily believe a hundred sonnets were written on me, full of the worst abuse which could be invented by the ignorant rabble."[1] I rejoined: "Prince, when Michel Agnolo Buonarroti displayed his Sacristy to view, with so many fine statues in it, the men of talent in our admirable school of Florence, always appreciative of truth and goodness, published more than a hundred sonnets, each vying with his neighbour to extol these masterpieces to the skies.[2] So then, just as Bandinello's work deserved all the evil which, he tells us, was then said about it, Buonarroti's deserved the enthusiastic praise which was bestowed upon it." These words of mine made Bandinello burst with fury; he turned on me, and cried: "And you, what have you got to say

[1] *Vasari confirms this statement. The statue, which may still be seen upon the great piazza, is, in truth, a very poor performance. The Florentines were angry because Bandinello had filched the commission away from Michel Angelo. It was uncovered in* 1534, *and Duke Alessandro had to imprison its lampooners.*

[2] *Cellini alludes of course to the Sacristy of S. Lorenzo, designed by Michel Angelo, with the portraits of the Medici and statues of Day, Night, Dawn, and Twilight.*

against my work?" "I will tell you if you have the patience to hear me out." "Go along then," he replied. The Duke and his attendants prepared themselves to listen. I began and opened my oration thus: "You must know that it pains me to point out the faults of your statue; I shall not, however, utter my own sentiments, but shall recapitulate what our most virtuous school of Florence says about it." The brutal fellow kept making disagreeable remarks and gesticulating with his hands and feet, until he enraged me so that I began again, and spoke far more rudely than I should otherwise have done, if he had behaved with decency. "Well, then, this virtuous school says that if one were to shave the hair of your Hercules, there would not be skull enough left to hold his brain; it says that it is impossible to distinguish whether his features are those of a man or of something between a lion and an ox; the face too is turned away from the action of the figure, and is so badly set upon the neck, with such poverty of art and so ill a grace, that nothing worse was ever seen; his sprawling shoulders are like the two pommels of an ass's pack-saddle; his breasts and all the muscles of the body are not portrayed from a man, but from a big sack full of melons set upright against a wall. The loins seem to be modelled from a bag of lanky pumpkins; nobody can tell how his two legs are attached to that vile trunk; it is impossible to say on which leg he stands, or which he uses to exert his strength; nor does he seem to be resting upon both, as sculptors who know something of their art have occasionally set the figure. It is obvious that the body is leaning forward more than

one-third of a cubit, which alone is the greatest and most insupportable fault committed by vulgar commonplace pretenders. Concerning the arms, they say that these are both stretched out without one touch of grace or one real spark of artistic talents, just as if you had never seen a naked model. Again, the right leg of Hercules and that of Cacus have got one mass of flesh between them, so that if they were to be separated, not only one of them, but both together, would be left without a calf at the point where they are touching. They say, too, that Hercules has one of his feet underground, while the other seems to be resting on hot coals."

LXXI

The fellow could not stand quiet to hear the damning errors of his Cacus in their turn enumerated. For one thing, I was telling the truth; for another, I was unmasking him to the Duke and all the people present, who showed by face and gesture first their surprise, and next their conviction that what I said was true. All at once he burst out: "Ah, you slanderous tongue! why don't you speak about my design?" I retorted: "A good draughtsman can never produce bad works; therefore I am inclined to believe that your drawing is no better than your statues." When he saw the amused expression on the Duke's face and the cutting gestures of the bystanders, he let his insolence get the better of him, and turned to me with that most hideous face of his, screaming aloud: "Oh, hold your tongue, you ugly . . ."[1] At

[1] *Oh sta cheto, soddomitaccio.*

these words the Duke frowned, and the others pursed their lips up and looked with knitted brows toward him. The horrible affront half maddened me with fury; but in a moment I recovered presence of mind enough to turn it off with a jest: "You madman! you exceed the bounds of decency. Yet would to God that I understood so noble an art as you allude to; they say that Jove used it with Ganymede in paradise, and here upon this earth it is practised by some of the greatest emperors and kings. I, however, am but a poor humble creature, who neither have the power nor the intelligence to perplex my wits with anything so admirable." When I had finished this speech, the Duke and his attendants could control themselves no longer, but broke into such shouts of laughter that one never heard the like. You must know, gentle readers, that though I put on this appearance of pleasantry, my heart was bursting in my body to think that a fellow, the foulest villain who ever breathed, should have dared in the presence of so great a prince to cast an insult of that atrocious nature in my teeth; but you must also know that he insulted the Duke, and not me; for had I not stood in that august presence, I should have felled him dead to earth. When the dirty stupid scoundrel observed that those gentlemen kept on laughing, he tried to change the subject, and divert them from deriding him; so he began as follows: "This fellow Benvenuto goes about boasting that I have promised him a piece of marble." I took him up at once. "What! did you not send to tell me by your journeyman, Francesco, that if I wished to work

in marble you would give me a block? I accepted it, and mean to have it." He retorted: "Be very well assured that you will never get it." Still smarting as I was under the calumnious insults he had flung at me, I lost my self-control, forgot I was in the presence of the Duke, and called out in a storm of fury: "I swear to you that if you do not send the marble to my house, you had better look out for another world, for if you stay upon this earth I will most certainly rip the wind out of your carcass."[1] Then suddenly awaking to the fact that I was standing in the presence of so great a duke, I turned submissively to his Excellency and said: "My lord, one fool makes a hundred; the follies of this man have blinded me for a moment to the glory of your most illustrious Excellency and to myself. I humbly crave your pardon." Then the Duke said to Bandinello: "Is it true that you promised him the marble?" He replied that it was true. Upon this the Duke addressed me: "Go to the Opera, and choose a piece according to your taste." I demurred that the man had promised to send it home to me. The words that passed between us were awful, and I refused to take the stone in any other way. Next morning a piece of marble was brought to my house. On asking who had sent it, they told me it was Bandinello, and that this was the very block which he had promised.[2]

[1] *In questo (mondo) ti sgonfierò a ogni modo.*

[2] *Vasari, in his Life of Bandinello, gives a curious confirmation of Cellini's veracity by reporting this quarrel, with some of the speeches which passed between the two rival artists. Yet he had not read Cellini's Memoirs, and was far from partial to the man. Comparing Vasari's with Cellini's account, we only notice that the latter has made Bandinello play a less witty part in the wordy strife than the former assigned him.*

LXXII

I had it brought at once into my studio, and began to chisel it. While I was rough-hewing the block, I made a model. But my eagerness to work in marble was so strong, that I had not patience to finish the model as correctly as this art demands. I soon noticed that the stone rang false beneath my strokes, which made me oftentimes repent commencing on it. Yet I got what I could out of the piece—that is, the Apollo and Hyacinth, which may still be seen unfinished in my workshop. While I was thus engaged, the Duke came to my house, and often said to me: "Leave your bronze awhile, and let me watch you working on the marble." Then I took chisel and mallet, and went at it blithely. He asked about the model I had made for my statue; to which I answered: "Duke, this marble is all cracked, but I shall carve something from it in spite of that; therefore I have not been able to settle the model, but shall go on doing the best I can."

His Excellency sent to Rome post-haste for a block of Greek marble, in order that I might restore his antique Ganymede, which was the cause of that dispute with Bandinello. When it arrived, I thought it a sin to cut it up for the head and arms and other bits wanting in the Ganymede; so I provided myself with another piece of stone, and reserved the Greek marble for a Narcissus which I modelled on a small scale in wax. I found that the block had two holes, penetrating to the depth of a quarter of a cubit, and two good inches wide. This led me to choose the attitude which may be noticed in my statue, avoiding the holes and

keeping my figure free from them. But rain had fallen scores of years upon the stone, filtering so deeply from the holes into its substance that the marble was decayed. Of this I had full proof at the time of a great inundation of the Arno, when the river rose to the height of more than a cubit and a half in my workshop.[1] Now the Narcissus stood upon a square of wood, and the water overturned it, causing the statue to break in two above the breasts. I had to join the pieces; and in order that the line of breakage might not be observed, I wreathed that garland of flowers round it which may still be seen upon the bosom. I went on working at the surface, employing some hours before sunrise, or now and then on feast-days, so as not to lose the time I needed for my Perseus.

It so happened on one of those mornings, while I was getting some little chisels into trim to work on the Narcissus, that a very fine splinter of steel flew into my right eye, and embedded itself so deeply in the pupil that it could not be extracted. I thought for certain I must lose the sight of that eye. After some days I sent for Maestro Raffaello de' Pilli, the surgeon, who obtained a couple of live pigeons, and placing me upon my back across a table, took the birds and opened a large vein they have beneath the wing, so that the blood gushed out into my eye. I felt immediately relieved, and in the space of two days the splinter came away, and I remained with eyesight greatly improved. Against the feast of S. Lucia,[2] which came round in

[1] *Cellini alludes to a celebrated inundation of the year* 1547.

[2] *S. Lucy, I need hardly remark, is the patroness of the eyes. In Italian art she is generally represented holding her own eyes upon a plate.*

three days, I made a golden eye out of a French crown, and had it presented at her shrine by one of my six nieces, daughters of my sister Liperata; the girl was ten years of age, and in her company I returned thanks to God and S. Lucia. For some while afterwards I did not work at the Narcissus, but pushed my Perseus forward under all the difficulties I have described. It was my purpose to finish it, and then to bid farewell to Florence.

LXXIII

Having succeeded so well with the cast of the Medusa, I had great hope of bringing my Perseus through; for I had laid the wax on, and felt confident that it would come out in bronze as perfectly as the Medusa. The waxen model produced so fine an effect, that when the Duke saw it and was struck with its beauty—whether somebody had persuaded him it could not be carried out with the same finish in metal, or whether he thought so for himself—he came to visit me more frequently than usual, and on one occasion said: "Benvenuto, this figure cannot succeed in bronze; the laws of art do not admit of it." These words of his Excellency stung me so sharply that I answered: "My lord, I know how very little confidence you have in me; and I believe the reason of this is that your most illustrious Excellency lends too ready an ear to my calumniators, or else indeed that you do not understand my art." He hardly let me close the sentence when he broke in: "I profess myself a connoisseur, and understand it very well indeed." I replied: "Yes, like a prince, not

like an artist; for if your Excellency understood my trade as well as you imagine, you would trust me on the proofs I have already given. These are, first, the colossal bronze bust of your Excellency, which is now in Elba;[1] secondly, the restoration of the Ganymede in marble, which offered so many difficulties and cost me so much trouble, that I would rather have made the whole statue new from the beginning; thirdly, the Medusa, cast by me in bronze, here now before your Excellency's eyes, the execution of which was a greater triumph of strength and skill than any of my predecessors in this fiendish art have yet achieved. Look you, my lord! I constructed that furnace anew on principles quite different from those of other founders; in addition to many technical improvements and ingenious devices, I supplied it with two issues for the metal, because this difficult and twisted figure could not otherwise have come out perfect. It is only owing to my intelligent insight into means and appliances that the statue turned out as it did; a triumph judged impossible by all the practitioners of this art. I should like you furthermore to be aware, my lord, for certain, that the sole reason why I succeeded with all those great and arduous works in France under his most admirable Majesty King Francis, was the high courage which that good monarch put into my heart by the liberal allowances he made me, and the multitude of workpeople he left at my disposal. I could have as many as I asked for, and employed at times above forty, all chosen by myself. These were the causes of my

[1] *At Portoferraio. It came afterwards to Florence.*

having there produced so many masterpieces in so short a space of time. Now then, my lord, put trust in me; supply me with the aid I need. I am confident of being able to complete a work which will delight your soul. But if your Excellency goes on disheartening me, and does not advance me the assistance which is absolutely required, neither I nor any man alive upon this earth can hope to achieve the slightest thing of value."

LXXIV

It was as much as the Duke could do to stand by and listen to my pleadings. He kept turning first this way and then that; while I, in despair, poor wretched I, was calling up remembrance of the noble state I held in France, to the great sorrow of my soul. All at once he cried: "Come, tell me, Benvenuto, how is it possible that yonder splendid head of Medusa, so high up there in the grasp of Perseus, should ever come out perfect?" I replied upon the instant: "Look you now, my lord! If your Excellency possessed that knowledge of the craft which you affirm you have, you would not fear one moment for the splendid head you speak of. There is good reason, on the other hand, to feel uneasy about this right foot, so far below and at a distance from the rest." When he heard these words, the Duke turned, half in anger, to some gentlemen in waiting, and exclaimed: "I verily believe that this Benvenuto prides himself on contradicting everything one says." Then he faced round to me with a touch of mockery, upon which his attendants did the like, and began to speak

as follows: "I will listen patiently to any argument you can possibly produce in explanation of your statement, which may convince me of its probability." I said in answer: "I will adduce so sound an argument that your Excellency shall perceive the full force of it." So I began: "You must know, my lord, that the nature of fire is to ascend, and therefore I promise you that Medusa's head will come out famously; but since it is not in the nature of fire to descend, and I must force it downwards six cubits by artificial means, I assure your Excellency upon this most convincing ground of proof that the foot cannot possibly come out. It will, however, be quite easy for me to restore it." "Why, then," said the Duke, "did you not devise it so that the foot should come out as well as you affirm the head will?" I answered: "I must have made a much larger furnace, with a conduit as thick as my leg; and so I might have forced the molten metal by its own weight to descend so far. Now, my pipe, which runs six cubits to the statue's foot, as I have said, is not thicker than two fingers. However, it was not worth the trouble and expense to make a larger; for I shall easily be able to mend what is lacking. But when my mould is more than half full, as I expect, from this middle point upwards, the fire ascending by its natural property, then the heads of Perseus and Medusa will come out admirably; you may be quite sure of it." After I had thus expounded these convincing arguments, together with many more of the same kind, which it would be tedious to set down here, the Duke shook his head and departed without further ceremony.

LXXV

Abandoned thus to my own resources, I took new courage, and banished the sad thoughts which kept recurring to my mind, making me often weep bitter tears of repentance for having left France; for though I did so only to revisit Florence, my sweet birthplace, in order that I might charitably succour my six nieces, this good action, as I well perceived, had been the beginning of my great misfortune. Nevertheless, I felt convinced that when my Perseus was accomplished, all these trials would be turned to high felicity and glorious well-being.

Accordingly I strengthened my heart, and with all the forces of my body and my purse, employing what little money still remained to me, I set to work. First I provided myself with several loads of pinewood from the forests of Serristori, in the neighbourhood of Montelupo. While these were on their way, I clothed my Perseus with the clay which I had prepared many months beforehand, in order that it might be duly seasoned. After making its clay tunic (for that is the term used in this art) and properly arming it and fencing it with iron girders, I began to draw the wax out by means of a slow fire. This melted and issued through numerous air-vents I had made; for the more there are of these, the better will the mould fill. When I had finished drawing off the wax, I constructed a funnel-shaped furnace all round the model of my Perseus.[1] It was built of bricks, so inter-

[1] *This furnace, called manica, was like a grain-hopper, so that the mould could stand upright in it as in a cup. The word manica is the same as our manuch, an antique form of sleeve.*

laced, the one above the other, that numerous apertures were left for the fire to exhale at. Then I began to lay on wood by degrees, and kept it burning two whole days and nights. At length, when all the wax was gone, and the mould was well baked, I set to work at digging the pit in which to sink it. This I performed with scrupulous regard to all the rules of art. When I had finished that part of my work, I raised the mould by windlasses and stout ropes to a perpendicular position, and suspending it with the greatest care one cubit above the level of the furnace, so that it hung exactly above the middle of the pit, I next lowered it gently down into the very bottom of the furnace, and had it firmly placed with every possible precaution for its safety. When this delicate operation was accomplished, I began to bank it up with the earth I had excavated; and, ever as the earth grew higher, I introduced its proper air-vents, which were little tubes of earthenware, such as folk use for drains and such-like purposes.[1] At length, I felt sure that it was admirably fixed, and that the filling-in of the pit and the placing of the air-vents had been properly performed. I also could see that my work-people understood my method, which differed very considerably from that of all the other masters in the trade. Feeling confident, then, that I could rely upon them, I next turned to my furnace, which I had filled with numerous pigs of copper and other bronze stuff. The

[1] *These air-vents, or sfiatatoi, were introduced into the outer mould, which Cellini calls the tonaca, or clay tunic laid upon the original model of baked clay and wax. They served the double purpose of drawing off the wax, whereby a space was left for the molten bronze to enter, and also of facilitating the penetration of this molten metal by allowing a free escape of air and gas from the outer mould.*

MINERVA
(BASE OF THE PERSEUS)

pieces were piled according to the laws of art, that is to say, so resting one upon the other that the flames could play freely through them, in order that the metal might heat and liquefy the sooner. At last I called out heartily to set the furnace going. The logs of pine were heaped in, and, what with the unctuous resin of the wood and the good draught I had given, my furnace worked so well that I was obliged to rush from side to side to keep it going. The labour was more than I could stand; yet I forced myself to strain every nerve and muscle. To increase my anxieties, the workshop took fire, and we were afraid lest the roof should fall upon our heads; while, from the garden, such a storm of wind and rain kept blowing in, that it perceptibly cooled the furnace.

Battling thus with all these untoward circumstances for several hours, and exerting myself beyond even the measure of my powerful constitution, I could at last bear up no longer, and a sudden fever,[1] of the utmost possible intensity, attacked me. I felt absolutely obliged to go and fling myself upon my bed. Sorely against my will having to drag myself away from the spot, I turned to my assistants, about ten or more in all, what with master-founders, hand-workers, country-fellows, and my own special journeymen, among whom was Bernardino Mannellini of Mugello, my apprentice through several years. To him in particular I spoke: "Look, my dear Bernardino, that you observe the rules which I have taught you; do your best with all despatch, for the metal will soon be fused. You cannot go wrong; these honest men

[1] *Una febbre efimera. Lit., a fever of one day's duration.*

will get the channels ready; you will easily be able to drive back the two plugs with this pair of iron crooks; and I am sure that my mould will fill miraculously. I feel more ill than I ever did in all my life, and verily believe that it will kill me before a few hours are over."[1] Thus, with despair at heart, I left them, and betook myself to bed.

LXXVI

No sooner had I got to bed, than I ordered my serving-maids to carry food and wine for all the men into the workshop; at the same time I cried: "I shall not be alive to-morrow." They tried to encourage me, arguing that my illness would pass over, since it came from excessive fatigue. In this way I spent two hours battling with the fever, which steadily increased, and calling out continually: "I feel that I am dying." My housekeeper, who was named Mona Fiore da Castel del Rio, a very notable manager and no less warm-hearted, kept chiding me for my discouragement; but, on the other hand, she paid me every kind attention which was possible. However, the sight of my physical pain and moral dejection so affected her, that,

[1] *Some technical terms require explanation in this sentence. The canali or channels were sluices for carrying the molten metal from the furnace into the mould. The mandriani, which I have translated by iron crooks, were poles fitted at the end with curved irons, by which the openings of the furnace, plugs, or in Italian spine, could be partially or wholly driven back, so as to let the molten metal flow through the channels into the mould. When the metal reached the mould, it entered in a red-hot stream between the tonaca, or outside mould, and the anima, or inner block, filling up exactly the space which had previously been occupied by the wax extracted by a method of slow burning alluded to above. I believe that the process is known as casting á cire perdue. The forma, or mould, consisted of two pieces; one hollow (la tonaca), which gave shape to the bronze; one solid and rounded (la anima), which stood at a short interval within the former, and regulated the influx of the metal. See above, p. 228, note.*

in spite of that brave heart of hers, she could not refrain from shedding tears; and yet, so far as she was able, she took good care I should not see them. While I was thus terribly afflicted, I beheld the figure of a man enter my chamber, twisted in his body into the form of a capital S. He raised a lamentable, doleful voice, like one who announces their last hour to men condemned to die upon the scaffold, and spoke these words: "O Benvenuto! your statue is spoiled, and there is no hope whatever of saving it." No sooner had I heard the shriek of that wretch than I gave a howl which might have been heard from the sphere of flame. Jumping from my bed, I seized my clothes and began to dress. The maids, and my lad, and every one who came around to help me, got kicks or blows of the fist, while I kept crying out in lamentation: "Ah! traitors! enviers! This is an act of treason, done by malice prepense! But I swear by God that I will sift it to the bottom, and before I die will leave such witness to the world of what I can do as shall make a score of mortals marvel."

When I had got my clothes on, I strode with soul bent on mischief toward the workshop; there I beheld the men, whom I had left erewhile in such high spirits, standing stupefied and downcast. I began at once and spoke: "Up with you! Attend to me! Since you have not been able or willing to obey the directions I gave you, obey me now that I am with you to conduct my work in person. Let no one contradict me, for in cases like this we need the aid of hand and hearing, not of advice." When I had uttered these words, a certain Maestro Alessandro Lastricati broke silence

and said: "Look you, Benvenuto, you are going to attempt an enterprise which the laws of art do not sanction, and which cannot succeed." I turned upon him with such fury and so full of mischief, that he and all the rest of them exclaimed with one voice: "On then! Give orders! We will obey your least commands, so long as life is left in us." I believe they spoke thus feelingly because they thought I must fall shortly dead upon the ground. I went immediately to inspect the furnace, and found that the metal was all curdled; an accident which we express by "being caked."[1] I told two of the hands to cross the road, and fetch from the house of the butcher Capretta, a load of young oak-wood, which had lain dry for above a year; this wood had been previously offered me by Madame Ginevra, wife of the said Capretta. So soon as the first armfuls arrived, I began to fill the grate beneath the furnace.[2] Now oak-wood of that kind heats more powerfully than any other sort of tree; and for this reason, where a slow fire is wanted, as in the case of gun-foundry, alder or pine is preferred. Accordingly, when the logs took fire, oh! how the cake began to stir beneath that awful heat, to glow and sparkle in a blaze! At the same time I kept stirring up the channels, and sent men upon the roof to stop the conflagration, which had gathered force from the increased combustion in the furnace; also I caused boards, carpets, and other hangings to be set up against the garden, in order to protect us from the violence of the rain.

[1] *Essersi fatto un migliaccio.*

[2] *The Italian is bracciaiuola, a pit below the grating, which receives the ashes from the furnace.*

LXXVII

When I had thus provided against these several disasters, I roared out first to one man and then to another: "Bring this thing here! Take that thing there!" At this crisis, when the whole gang saw the cake was on the point of melting, they did my bidding, each fellow working with the strength of three. I then ordered half a pig of pewter to be brought, which weighed about sixty pounds, and flung it into the middle of the cake inside the furnace. By this means, and by piling on wood and stirring now with pokers and now with iron rods, the curdled mass rapidly began to liquefy. Then, knowing I had brought the dead to life again, against the firm opinion of those ignoramuses, I felt such vigour fill my veins, that all those pains of fever, all those fears of death, were quite forgotten.

All of a sudden an explosion took place, attended by a tremendous flash of flame, as though a thunderbolt had formed and been discharged amongst us. Unwonted and appalling terror astonied every one, and me more even than the rest. When the din was over and the dazzling light extinguished, we began to look each other in the face. Then I discovered that the cap of the furnace had blown up, and the bronze was bubbling over from its source beneath. So I had the mouths of my mould immediately opened, and at the same time drove in the two plugs which kept back the molten metal. But I noticed that it did not flow as rapidly as usual, the reason being probably that the fierce heat of the fire we kindled had consumed its base alloy. Accordingly I sent for all my pewter plat-

ters, porringers, and dishes, to the number of some two hundred pieces, and had a portion of them cast, one by one, into the channels, the rest into the furnace. This expedient succeeded, and every one could now perceive that my bronze was in most perfect liquefaction, and my mould was filling; whereupon they all with heartiness and happy cheer assisted and obeyed my bidding, while I, now here, now there, gave orders, helped with my own hands, and cried aloud: "O God! Thou that by Thy immeasurable power didst rise from the dead, and in Thy glory didst ascend to heaven!". . . even thus in a moment my mould was filled; and seeing my work finished, I fell upon my knees, and with all my heart gave thanks to God.

After all was over, I turned to a plate of salad on a bench there, and ate with hearty appetite, and drank together with the whole crew. Afterwards I retired to bed, healthy and happy, for it was now two hours before morning, and slept as sweetly as though I had never felt a touch of illness. My good housekeeper, without my giving any orders, had prepared a fat capon for my repast. So that, when I rose, about the hour for breaking fast, she presented herself with a smiling countenance, and said: "Oh! is that the man who felt that he was dying? Upon my word, I think the blows and kicks you dealt us last night, when you were so enraged, and had that demon in your body as it seemed, must have frightened away your mortal fever! The fever feared that it might catch it too, as we did!" All my poor household, relieved in like measure from anxiety and overwhelming labour, went at once to buy earthen vessels in order to re-

place the pewter I had cast away. Then we dined together joyfully; nay, I cannot remember a day in my whole life when I dined with greater gladness or a better appetite.

After our meal I received visits from the several men who had assisted me. They exchanged congratulations, and thanked God for our success, saying they had learned and seen things done which other masters judged impossible. I too grew somewhat glorious; and deeming I had shown myself a man of talent, indulged a boastful humour. So I thrust my hand into my purse, and paid them all to their full satisfaction.

That evil fellow, my mortal foe, Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, majordomo of the Duke, took great pains to find out how the affair had gone. In answer to his questions, the two men whom I suspected of having caked my metal for me, said I was no man, but of a certainty some powerful devil, since I had accomplished what no craft of the art could do; indeed they did not believe a mere ordinary fiend could work such miracles as I in other ways had shown. They exaggerated the whole affair so much, possibly in order to excuse their own part in it, that the majordomo wrote an account to the Duke, who was then in Pisa, far more marvellous and full of thrilling incidents than what they had narrated.

LXXVIII

After I had let my statue cool for two whole days, I began to uncover it by slow degrees. The first thing I found was that the head of Medusa had come out most admirably, thanks to the air-vents; for, as

I had told the Duke, it is the nature of fire to ascend. Upon advancing farther, I discovered that the other head, that, namely, of Perseus, had succeeded no less admirably; and this astonished me far more, because it is at a considerably lower level than that of the Medusa. Now the mouths of the mould were placed above the head of Perseus and behind his shoulders; and I found that all the bronze my furnace contained had been exhausted in the head of this figure. It was a miracle to observe that not one fragment remained in the orifice of the channel, and that nothing was wanting to the statue. In my great astonishment I seemed to see in this the hand of God arranging and controlling all.

I went on uncovering the statue with success, and ascertained that everything had come out in perfect order, until I reached the foot of the right leg on which the statue rests. There the heel itself was formed, and going farther, I found the foot apparently complete. This gave me great joy on the one side, but was half unwelcome to me on the other, merely because I had told the Duke that it could not come out. However, when I reached the end, it appeared that the toes and a little piece above them were unfinished, so that about half the foot was wanting. Although I knew that this would add a trifle to my labour, I was very well pleased, because I could now prove to the Duke how well I understood my business. It is true that far more of the foot than I expected had been perfectly formed; the reason of this was that, from causes I have recently described, the bronze was hotter than our rules of art prescribe; also that

I had been obliged to supplement the alloy with my pewter cups and platters, which no one else, I think, had ever done before.

Having now ascertained how successfully my work had been accomplished, I lost no time in hurrying to Pisa, where I found the Duke. He gave me a most gracious reception, as did also the Duchess; and although the majordomo had informed them of the whole proceedings, their Excellencies deemed my performance far more stupendous and astonishing when they heard the tale from my own mouth. When I arrived at the foot of Perseus, and said it had not come out perfect, just as I previously warned his Excellency, I saw an expression of wonder pass over his face, while he related to the Duchess how I had predicted this beforehand. Observing the princes to be so well disposed towards me, I begged leave from the Duke to go to Rome. He granted it in most obliging terms, and bade me return as soon as possible to complete his Perseus; giving me letters of recommendation meanwhile to his ambassador, Averardo Serristori. We were then in the first years of Pope Giulio de Monti.[1]

LXXIX

Before leaving home, I directed my work-people to proceed according to the method I had taught them. The reason of my journey was as follows. I had made a life-sized bust in bronze of Bindo Altoviti,[2] the son

[1] *Gio Maria del Monte Sansovino was elected Pope, with the title of Julius III., in February* 1550.

[2] *This man was a member of a very noble Florentine family. Born in* 1491, *he was*

of Antonio, and had sent it to him at Rome. He set it up in his study, which was very richly adorned with antiquities and other works of art; but the room was not designed for statues or for paintings, since the windows were too low, so that the light coming from beneath spoiled the effect they would have produced under more favourable conditions. It happened one day that Bindo was standing at his door, when Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, the sculptor, passed by; so he begged him to come in and see his study. Michel Agnolo followed, and on entering the room and looking round, he exclaimed: "Who is the master who made that good portrait of you in so fine a manner? You must know that that bust pleases me as much, or even more, than those antiques; and yet there are many fine things to be seen among the latter. If those windows were above instead of beneath, the whole collection would show to greater advantage, and your portrait, placed among so many masterpieces, would hold its own with credit." No sooner had Michel Agnolo left the house of Bindo than he wrote me a very kind letter, which ran as follows: "My dear Benvenuto, I have known you for many years as the greatest goldsmith of whom we have any information; and henceforward I shall know you for a sculptor of like quality. I must tell you that Master Bindo Altoviti took me to see his bust in bronze, and informed me that you had made it. I was greatly pleased with the work; but it annoyed me to notice that it was placed in a bad light;

at this epoch Tuscan Consul in Rome. Cellini's bust of him still exists in the Palazzo Altoviti at Rome.

for if it were suitably illuminated, it would show itself to be the fine performance that it is." This letter abounded with the most affectionate and complimentary expressions towards myself; and before I left for Rome, I showed it to the Duke, who read it with much kindly interest, and said to me: "Benvenuto, if you write to him, and can persuade him to return to Florence, I will make him a member of the Forty-eight."[1] Accordingly I wrote a letter full of warmth, and offered in the Duke's name a hundred times more than my commission carried; but not wanting to make any mistake, I showed this to the Duke before I sealed it, saying to his most illustrious Excellency: "Prince, perhaps I have made him too many promises." He replied: "Michel Agnolo deserves more than you have promised, and I will bestow on him still greater favours." To this letter he sent no answer, and I could see that the Duke was much offended with him.

LXXX

When I reached Rome, I went to lodge in Bindo Altoviti's house. He told me at once how he had shown his bronze bust to Michel Agnolo, and how the latter had praised it. So we spoke for some length upon this topic. I ought to narrate the reasons why I had taken this portrait. Bindo had in his hands 1200 golden crowns of mine, which formed part of 5000 he had lent the Duke; 4000 were his own, and mine stood in his name, while I received that por-

[1] *This was one of the three Councils created by Clement VII. in* 1532, *when he changed the Florentine constitution. It corresponded to a Senate.*

tion of the interest which accrued to me.[1] This led to my taking his portrait; and when he saw the wax model for the bust, he sent me fifty golden scudi by a notary in his employ, named Ser Giuliano Paccalli. I did not want to take the money, so I sent it back to him by the same hand, saying at a later time to Bindo: "I shall be satisfied if you keep that sum of mine for me at interest, so that I may gain a little on it." When we came to square accounts on this occasion, I observed that he was ill disposed towards me, since, instead of treating me affectionately, according to his previous wont, he put on a stiff air; and although I was staying in his house, he was never good-humoured, but always surly. However, we settled our business in a few words. I sacrificed my pay for his portrait, together with the bronze, and we arranged that he should keep my money at 15 per cent. during my natural life.

LXXXI

One of the first things I did was to go and kiss the Pope's feet; and while I was speaking with his Holiness, Messer Averardo Serristori, our Duke's Envoy, arrived.[2] I had made some proposals to the Pope, which I think he would have agreed upon, and I should have been very glad to return to Rome on account of the great difficulties which I had at Florence. But I soon perceived that the ambassador had countermined me.

[1] *To make the sum correct,* 5200 *ought to have been lent the Duke.*

[2] *His despatches form a valuable series of historical documents. Firenze, Le Monnier,* 1853.

Then I went to visit Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, and repeated what I had written from Florence to him in the Duke's name. He replied that he was engaged upon the fabric of S. Peter's, and that this would prevent him from leaving Rome. I rejoined that, as he had decided on the model of that building, he could leave its execution to his man Urbino, who would carry out his orders to the letter. I added much about future favours, in the form of a message from the Duke. Upon this he looked me hard in the face, and said with a sarcastic smile: "And you! to what extent are you satisfied with him?" Although I replied that I was extremely contented and was very well treated by his Excellency, he showed that he was acquainted with the greater part of my annoyances, and gave as his final answer that it would be difficult for him to leave Rome. To this I added that he could not do better than to return to his own land, which was governed by a prince renowned for justice, and the greatest lover of the arts and sciences who ever saw the light of this world. As I have remarked above, he had with him a servant of his who came from Urbino, and had lived many years in his employment, rather as valet and housekeeper than anything else; this indeed was obvious, because he had acquired no skill in the arts.[1] Consequently, while I was pressing Michel Agnolo with arguments he could not answer, he turned round sharply to Urbino, as though to ask him his opinion. The fellow began to bawl out in his rustic way: "I will never leave my

[1] *Upon the death of this Urbino, Michel Angelo wrote a touching sonnet and a very feeling letter to Vasari.*

master Michel Agnolo's side till I shall have flayed him or he shall have flayed me." These stupid words forced me to laugh, and without saying farewell, I lowered my shoulders and retired.

LXXXII

The miserable bargain I had made with Bindo Altoviti, losing my bust and leaving him my capital for life, taught me what the faith of merchants is; so I returned in bad spirits to Florence. I went at once to the palace to pay my respects to the Duke, whom I found to be at Castello beyond Ponte a Rifredi. In the palace I met Messer Pier Francesco Ricci, the majordomo, and when I drew nigh to pay him the usual compliments, he exclaimed with measureless astonishment: "Oh, are you come back?" and with the same air of surprise, clapping his hands together, he cried: "The Duke is at Castello!" then turned his back and left me. I could not form the least idea why the beast behaved in such an extraordinary manner to me.

Proceeding at once to Castello, and entering the garden where the Duke was, I caught sight of him at a distance; but no sooner had he seen me than he showed signs of surprise, and intimated that I might go about my business. I had been reckoning that his Excellency would treat me with the same kindness, or even greater, as before I left for Rome; so now, when he received me with such rudeness, I went back, much hurt, to Florence. While resuming my work and pushing my statue forward, I racked my brains to think what could have brought about this sudden change in the Duke's manner. The curious way in

which Messer Sforza and some other gentlemen close to his Excellency's person eyed me, prompted me to ask the former what the matter was. He only replied with a sort of smile: "Benvenuto, do your best to be an honest man, and have no concern for anything else." A few days afterwards I obtained an audience of the Duke, who received me with a kind of grudging grace, and asked me what I had been doing at Rome. To the best of my ability I maintained the conversation, and told him the whole story about Bindo Altoviti's bust. It was evident that he listened with attention; so I went on talking about Michel Agnolo Buonarroti. At this he showed displeasure; but Urbino's stupid speech about the flaying made him laugh aloud. Then he said: "Well, it is he who suffers!" and I took my leave.

There can be no doubt that Ser Pier Francesco, the majordomo, must have served me some ill turn with the Duke, which did not, however, succeed; for God, who loves the truth, protected me, as He hath ever saved me, from a sea of dreadful dangers, and I hope will save me till the end of this my life, however full of trials it may be. I march forward, therefore, with a good heart, sustained alone by His divine power; nor let myself be terrified by any furious assault of fortune or my adverse stars. May only God maintain me in His grace!

LXXXIII

I must beg your attention now, most gracious reader, for a very terrible event which happened.

I used the utmost diligence and industry to com-

plete my statue, and went to spend my evenings in the Duke's wardrobe, assisting there the goldsmiths who were working for his Excellency. Indeed, they laboured mainly on designs which I had given them. Noticing that the Duke took pleasure in seeing me at work and talking with me, I took it into my head to go there sometimes also by day. It happened upon one of those days that his Excellency came as usual to the room where I was occupied, and more particularly because he heard of my arrival. His Excellency entered at once into conversation, raising several interesting topics, upon which I gave my views so much to his entertainment that he showed more cheerfulness than I had ever seen in him before. All of a sudden, one of his secretaries appeared, and whispered something of importance in his ear; whereupon the Duke rose, and retired with the official into another chamber. Now the Duchess had sent to see what his Excellency was doing, and her page brought back this answer: "The Duke is talking and laughing with Benvenuto, and is in excellent good-humour." When the Duchess heard this, she came immediately to the wardrobe, and not finding the Duke there, took a seat beside us. After watching us at work awhile, she turned to me with the utmost graciousness, and showed me a necklace of large and really very fine pearls. On being asked by her what I thought of them, I said it was in truth a very handsome ornament. Then she spoke as follows: "I should like the Duke to buy them for me; so I beg you, my dear Benvenuto, to praise them to him as highly as you can." At these words I disclosed my mind to the

Duchess with all the respect I could, and answered: "My lady, I thought this necklace of pearls belonged already to your most illustrious Excellency. Now that I am aware you have not yet acquired them, it is right, nay, more, it is my duty to utter what I might otherwise have refrained from saying, namely, that my mature professional experience enables me to detect very grave faults in the pearls, and for this reason I could never advise your Excellency to purchase them." She replied: "The merchant offers them for six thousand crowns; and were it not for some of those trifling defects you speak of, the rope would be worth over twelve thousand." To this I replied, that "even were the necklace of quite flawless quality, I could not advise any one to bid up to five thousand crowns for it; for pearls are not gems; pearls are but fishes' bones, which in the course of time must lose their freshness. Diamonds, rubies, emeralds, and sapphires, on the contrary, never grow old; these four are precious stones, and these it is quite right to purchase." When I had thus spoken, the Duchess showed some signs of irritation, and exclaimed: "I have a mind to possess these pearls; so, prithee, take them to the Duke, and praise them up to the skies; even if you have to use some words beyond the bounds of truth, speak them to do me service; it will be well for you!"

I have always been the greatest friend of truth and foe of lies: yet, compelled by necessity, unwilling to lose the favour of so great a princess, I took those confounded pearls sorely against my inclination, and went with them over to the other room, whither the

Duke had withdrawn. No sooner did he set eyes upon me than he cried: "O Benvenuto! what are you about here?" I uncovered the pearls and said: "My lord, I am come to show you a most splendid necklace of pearls, of the rarest quality, and truly worthy of your Excellency; I do not believe it would be possible to put together eighty pearls which could show better than these do in a necklace. My counsel therefore is, that you should buy them, for they are in good sooth miraculous." He responded on the instant: "I do not choose to buy them; they are not pearls of the quality and goodness you affirm; I have seen the necklace, and they do not please me." Then I added: "Pardon me, prince! These pearls exceed in rarity and beauty any which were ever brought together for a necklace." The Duchess had risen, and was standing behind a door listening to all I said. Well, when I had praised the pearls a thousandfold more warmly than I have described above, the Duke turned toward me with a kindly look, and said: "O my dear Benvenuto, I know that you have an excellent judgment in these matters. If the pearls are as rare as you certify, I should not hesitate about their purchase, partly to gratify the Duchess, and partly to possess them, seeing I have always need of such things, not so much for her Grace, as for the various uses of my sons and daughters." When I heard him speak thus, having once begun to tell fibs, I stuck to them with even greater boldness; I gave all the colour of truth I could to my lies, confiding in the promise of the Duchess to help me at the time of need. More than two hundred crowns were to be my com-

mission on the bargain, and the Duchess had intimated that I should receive so much; but I was firmly resolved not to touch a farthing, in order to secure my credit, and convince the Duke I was not prompted by avarice. Once more his Excellency began to address me with the greatest courtesy: "I know that you are a consummate judge of these things; therefore, if you are the honest man I always thought you, tell me now the truth." Thereat I flushed up to my eyes, which at the same time filled with tears, and said to him: "My lord, if I tell your most illustrious Excellency the truth, I shall make a mortal foe of the Duchess; this will oblige me to depart from Florence, and my enemies will begin at once to pour contempt upon my Perseus, which I have announced as a masterpiece to the most noble school of your illustrious Excellency. Such being the case, I recommend myself to your most illustrious Excellency."

LXXXIV

The Duke was now aware that all my previous speeches had been, as it were, forced out of me. So he rejoined: "If you have confidence in me, you need not stand in fear of anything whatever." I recommenced: "Alas! my lord, what can prevent this coming to the ears of the Duchess?" The Duke lifted his hand in sign of troth-pledge[1] and exclaimed: "Be assured that what you say will be buried in a diamond casket!" To this engagement upon honour I replied by telling the truth according to my judgment, namely, that the pearls were not worth above two thousand

[1] *Alzò la fede.*

crowns. The Duchess, thinking we had stopped talking, for we now were speaking in as low a voice as possible, came forward, and began as follows: "My lord, do me the favour to purchase this necklace, because I have set my heart on them, and your Benvenuto here has said he never saw a finer row of pearls." The Duke replied: "I do not choose to buy them." "Why, my lord, will not your Excellency gratify me by buying them?" "Because I do not care to throw my money out of window." The Duchess recommenced: "What do you mean by throwing your money away, when Benvenuto, in whom you place such well-merited confidence, has told me that they would be cheap at over three thousand crowns?" Then the Duke said: "My lady! my Benvenuto here has told me that, if I purchase this necklace, I shall be throwing my money away, inasmuch as the pearls are neither round nor well-matched, and some of them are quite faded. To prove that this is so, look here! look there! consider this one and then that. The necklace is not the sort of thing for me." At these words the Duchess cast a glance of bitter spite at me, and retired with a threatening nod of her head in my direction. I felt tempted to pack off at once and bid farewell to Italy. Yet my Perseus being all but finished, I did not like to leave without exposing it to public view. But I ask every one to consider in what a grievous plight I found myself!

The Duke had given orders to his porters in my presence, that if I appeared at the palace, they should always admit me through his apartments to the place where he might happen to be. The Duchess com-

JOVE
(BASE OF THE PERSEUS)

manded the same men, whenever I showed my face at that palace, to drive me from its gates. Accordingly, no sooner did I present myself, than these fellows left their doors and bade me begone; at the same time they took good care lest the Duke should perceive what they were after; for if he caught sight of me before those wretches, he either called me, or beckoned to me to advance.

At this juncture the Duchess sent for Bernardone, the broker, of whom she had so often complained to me, abusing his good-for-nothingness and utter worthlessness. She now confided in him as she had previously done in me. He replied: "My princess, leave the matter in my hands." Then the rascal presented himself before the Duke with that necklace in his hands. No sooner did the Duke set eyes on him than he bade him begone. But the rogue lifted his big ugly voice, which sounded like the braying of an ass through his huge nose, and spoke to this effect: "Ah! my dear lord, for Heaven's sake buy this necklace for the poor Duchess, who is dying to have it, and cannot indeed live without it." The fellow poured forth so much of this stupid nonsensical stuff that the Duke's patience was exhausted, and he cried: "Oh, get away with you, or blow your chaps out till I smack them!" The knave knew very well what he was after; for if by blowing out his cheeks or singing *La Bella Franceschina*,[1] he could bring the Duke to make that purchase, then he gained the good grace of the Duchess, and to boot his own commission, which rose to some hundreds of crowns. Conse-

[1] *A popular ballad of the time.*

quently he did blow out his chaps. The Duke smacked them with several hearty boxes, and, in order to get rid of him, struck rather harder than his wont was. The sound blows upon his cheeks not only reddened them above their natural purple, but also brought tears into his eyes. All the same, while smarting, he began to cry: "Lo! my lord, a faithful servant of his prince, who tries to act rightly, and is willing to put up with any sort of bad treatment, provided only that poor lady have her heart's desire!" The Duke, tired of the ribald fellow, either to recompense the cuffs which he had dealt him, or for the Duchess's sake, whom he was ever most inclined to gratify, cried out: "Get away with you, with God's curse on you! Go, make the bargain; I am willing to do what my lady Duchess wishes."

From this incident we may learn to know how evil Fortune exerts her rage against a poor right-minded man, and how the strumpet Luck can help a miserable rascal. I lost the good graces of the Duchess once and forever, and thereby went close to having the Duke's protection taken from me. He acquired that thumping fee for his commission, and to boot their favour. Thus it will not serve us in this world to be merely men of honesty and talent.

LXXXV

About this time the war of Siena broke out,[1] and the Duke, wishing to fortify Florence, distributed the

[1] *In the year 1552, when Piero Strozzi acted as general for the French King, Henri II., against the Spaniards. The war ended in the capitulation of Siena in 1555. In 1557 it was ceded by Philip II. to Cosimo de' Medici.*

gates among his architects and sculptors. I received the Prato gate and the little one of Arno, which is on the way to the mills. The Cavaliere Bandinello got the gate of San Friano; Pasqualino d'Ancona, the gate at San Pier Gattolini; Giulian di Baccio d'Agnolo, the wood-carver, had the gate of San Giorgio; Particino, the wood-carver, had the gate of Santo Niccolo; Francesco da San Gallo, the sculptor, called Il Margolla, got the gate of Santa Croce; and Giovan Battista, surnamed Il Tasso, the gate Pinti.[1] Other bastions and gates were assigned to divers engineers, whose names I do not recollect, nor indeed am I concerned with them. The Duke, who certainly was at all times a man of great ability, went round the city himself upon a tour of inspection, and when he had made his mind up, he sent for Lattanzio Gorini, one of his paymasters. Now this man was to some extent an amateur of military architecture; so his Excellency commissioned him to make designs for the fortifications of the gates, and sent each of us his own gate drawn according to the plan. After examining the plan for mine, and perceiving that it was very incorrect in many details, I took it and went immediately to the Duke. When I tried to point out these defects, the Duke interrupted me and exclaimed with fury: "Benvenuto, I will give way to you upon the point of statuary, but in this art of fortification I choose that you should cede to me. So carry out the design which I have given you." To these brave words I

[1] *These artists, with the exception of Pasqualino, are all known to us in the conditions described by Cellini. Francesco da San Gallo was the son of Giuliano, and nephew of Antonio da San Gallo.*

answered as gently as I could, and said: "My lord, your most illustrious Excellency has taught me something even in my own fine art of statuary, inasmuch as we have always exchanged ideas upon that subject; I beg you then to deign to listen to me upon this matter of your fortifications, which is far more important than making statues. If I am permitted to discuss it also with your Excellency, you will be better able to teach me how I have to serve you." This courteous speech of mine induced him to discuss the plans with me; and when I had clearly demonstrated that they were not conceived on a right method, he said: "Go, then, and make a design yourself, and I will see if it satisfies me." Accordingly, I made two designs according to the right principles for fortifying those two gates, and took them to him; and when he distinguished the true from the false system, he exclaimed good-humouredly: "Go and do it in your own way, for I am content to have it so." I set to work then with the greatest diligence.

LXXXVI

There was on guard at the gate of Prato a certain Lombard captain; he was a truculent and stalwart fellow, of incredibly coarse speech, whose presumption matched his utter ignorance. This man began at once to ask me what I was about there. I politely exhibited my drawings, and took infinite pains to make him understand my purpose. The rude brute kept rolling his head, and turning first to one side and then to the other, shifting himself upon his legs, and twirling his enormous moustachios; then he drew his

cap down over his eyes and roared out: "Zounds! deuce take it! I can make nothing of this rigmarole." At last the animal became so tiresome that I said: "Leave it then to me, who do understand it," and turned my shoulders to go about my business. At this he began to threaten me with his head, and, setting his left hand on the pommel of his sword, tilted the point up, and exclaimed: "Hullo, my master! you want perhaps to make me cross blades with you?" I faced round in a great fury, for the man had stirred my blood, and cried out: "It would be less trouble to run you through the body than to build the bastion of this gate." In an instant we both set hands to our swords, without quite drawing; for a number of honest folk, citizens of Florence, and others of them courtiers, came running up. The greater part of them rated the captain, telling him that he was in the wrong, that I was a man to give him back as good as I got, and that if this came to the Duke's ears, it would be the worse for him. Accordingly he went off on his own business, and I began with my bastion.

After setting things in order there, I proceeded to the other little gate of Arno, where I found a captain from Cesena, the most polite, well-mannered man I ever knew in that profession. He had the air of a gentle young lady, but at need he could prove himself one of the boldest and bloodiest fighters in the world. This agreeable gentleman observed me so attentively that he made me bashful and self-conscious; and seeing that he wanted to understand what I was doing, I courteously explained my plans. Suffice it to say, that we vied with each other in civili-

ties, which made me do far better with this bastion than with the other.

I had nearly finished the two bastions when an inroad of Piero Strozzi's people struck such terror into the country-folk of Prato that they began to leave it in a body, and all their carts, laden with the household goods of each family, came crowding into the city. The number of them was so enormous, cart jostling with cart, and the confusion was so great, that I told the guards to look out lest the same misadventure should happen at this gate as had occurred at the gates of Turin; for if we had once cause to lower the portcullis, it would not be able to perform its functions, but must inevitably stick suspended upon one of the waggons. When that big brute of a captain heard these words, he replied with insults, and I retorted in the same tone. We were on the point of coming to a far worse quarrel than before. However, the folk kept us asunder; and when I had finished my bastions, I touched some score of crowns, which I had not expected, and which were uncommonly welcome. So I returned with a blithe heart to finish my Perseus.

LXXXVII

During those days some antiquities had been discovered in the country round Arezzo. Among them was the Chimæra, that bronze lion which is to be seen in the rooms adjacent to the great hall of the palace.[1] Together with the Chimæra a number of little statuettes, likewise in bronze, had been brought to

[1] *Now in the Uffizzi.*

light; they were covered with earth and rust, and each of them lacked either head or hands or feet. The Duke amused his leisure hours by cleaning up these statuettes himself with certain little chisels used by goldsmiths. It happened on one occasion that I had to speak on business to his Excellency; and while we were talking, he reached me a little hammer, with which I struck the chisels the Duke held, and so the figures were disengaged from their earth and rust. In this way we passed several evenings, and then the Duke commissioned me to restore the statuettes. He took so much pleasure in these trifles that he made me work by day also, and if I delayed coming, he used to send for me. I very often submitted to his Excellency that if I left my Perseus in the daytime, several bad consequences would ensue. The first of these, which caused me the greatest anxiety, was that, seeing me spend so long a time upon my statue, the Duke himself might get disgusted; which indeed did afterwards happen. The other was that I had several journeymen who in my absence were up to two kinds of mischief: first, they spoilt my piece, and then they did as little work as possible. These arguments made his Excellency consent that I should only go to the palace after twenty-four o'clock.

I had now conciliated the affection of his Excellency to such an extent, that every evening when I came to him he treated me with greater kindness. About this time the new apartments were built toward the lions;[1] the Duke then wishing to be able to retire

[1] *Lions from a very early period had always been kept in part of the Palazzo Vecchio.*

into a less public part of the palace, fitted up for himself a little chamber in these new lodgings, and ordered me approach to it by a private passage. I had to pass through his wardrobe, then across the stage of the great hall, and afterwards through certain little dark galleries and cabinets. The Duchess, however, after a few days, deprived me of this means of access by having all the doors upon the path I had to traverse locked up. The consequence was that every evening when I arrived at the palace, I had to wait a long while, because the Duchess occupied the cabinets for her personal necessities.[1] Her habit of body was unhealthy, and so I never came without incommoding her. This and other causes made her hate the very sight of me. However, notwithstanding great discomforts and daily annoyances, I persevered in going. The Duke's orders, meanwhile, were so precise, that no sooner did I knock at those doors, than they were immediately opened, and I was allowed to pass freely where I chose. The consequence was that occasionally, while walking noiselessly and unexpectedly through the private rooms, I came upon the Duchess at a highly inconvenient moment. Bursting then into such a furious storm of rage that I was frightened, she cried out: "When will you ever finish mending up those statuettes? Upon my word, this perpetual going and coming of yours has grown to be too great a nuisance." I replied as gently as I could: "My lady and sole mistress, I have no other desire than to serve you loyally and with the strictest obedience. This work to which the Duke has put

[1] *Alle sue comoditâ.*

me will last several months; so tell me, most illustrious Excellency, whether you wish me not to come here any more. In that case I will not come, whoever calls me; nay, should the Duke himself send for me, I shall reply that I am ill, and by no means will I intrude again." To this speech she made answer: "I do not bid you not to come, nor do I bid you to disobey the Duke; but I repeat that your work seems to me as though it would never be finished."

Whether the Duke heard something of this encounter, or whatever the cause was, he began again as usual. Toward twenty-four o'clock he sent for me; and his messenger always spoke to this effect: "Take good care, and do not fail to come, for the Duke is waiting for you." In this way I continued, always with the same inconveniences, to put in an appearance on several successive evenings. Upon one occasion among others, arriving in my customary way, the Duke, who had probably been talking with the Duchess about private matters, turned upon me in a furious anger. I was terrified, and wanted to retire. But he called out: "Come in, friend Benvenuto; go to your affairs; I will rejoin you in a few moments." While I was passing onward, Don Garzia, then quite a little fellow, plucked me by the cape, and played with me as prettily as such a child could do. The Duke looked up delighted, and exclaimed: "What pleasant and friendly terms my boys are on with you!"

LXXXVIII

While I was working at these bagatelles, the Prince, and Don Giovanni, and Don Arnando, and Don Gar-

zia kept always hovering around me, teasing me whenever the Duke's eyes were turned.[1] I begged them for mercy's sake to hold their peace. They answered: "That we cannot do." I told them: "What one cannot is required of no one! So have your will! Along with you!" At this both Duke and Duchess burst out laughing.

Another evening, after I had finished the small bronze figures which are wrought into the pedestal of Perseus, that is to say, the Jupiter, Mercury, Minerva, and Danae, with the little Perseus seated at his mother's feet, I had them carried into the room where I was wont to work, and arranged them in a row, raised somewhat above the line of vision, so that they produced a magnificent effect. The Duke heard of this, and made his entrance sooner than usual. It seems that the person who informed his Excellency praised them above their merit, using terms like "far superior to the ancients," and so forth; wherefore the Duke came talking pleasantly with the Duchess about my doings. I rose at once and went to meet them. With his fine and truly princely manner he received me, lifting his right hand, in which he held as superb a pear-graft as could possibly be seen. "Take it, my Benvenuto!" he exclaimed; "plant this pear in your garden." To these words I replied with a delighted gesture: "O my lord, does your most illustrious Excellency really mean that I should plant it in the garden of my house?" "Yes," he said, "in the garden of the house which belongs to you. Have you

[1] *The Prince was Don Francesco, then aged twelve; Don Giovanni was ten, Don Garzia was six, and Don Ferdinando four.*

DON GARZIA DE' MEDICI
(BRONZINO)

understood me?" I thanked his Excellency, and the Duchess in like manner, with the best politeness I could use.

After this they both took seats in front of the statues, and for more than two hours went on talking about nothing but the beauties of the work. The Duchess was wrought up to such an enthusiasm that she cried out: "I do not like to let those exquisite figures be wasted on the pedestal down there in the piazza, where they will run the risk of being injured. I would much rather have you fix them in one of my apartments, where they will be preserved with the respect due to their singular artistic qualities." I opposed this plan with many forcible arguments; but when I saw that she was determined I should not place them on the pedestal where they now stand, I waited till next day, and went to the palace about twenty-two o'clock. Ascertaining that the Duke and Duchess were out riding, and having already prepared the pedestal, I had the statues carried down, and soldered them with lead into their proper niches. Oh, when the Duchess knew of this, how angry she was! Had it not been for the Duke, who manfully defended me, I should have paid dearly for my daring. Her indignation about the pearls, and now again about this matter of the statues, made her so contrive that the Duke abandoned his amusements in our workshop. Consequently I went there no more, and was met again with the same obstructions as formerly whenever I wanted to gain access to the palace.

LXXXIX

I returned to the Loggia,[1] whither my Perseus had already been brought, and went on putting the last touches to my work, under the old difficulties always; that is to say, lack of money, and a hundred untoward accidents, the half of which would have cowed a man armed with adamant.

However, I pursued my course as usual; and one morning, after I had heard mass at San Piero Scheraggio, that brute Bernardone, broker, worthless goldsmith, and by the Duke's grace purveyor to the mint, passed by me. No sooner had he got outside the church than the dirty pig let fly four cracks which might have been heard from San Miniato. I cried: "Yah! pig, poltroon, donkey! is that the noise your filthy talents make?" and ran off for a cudgel. He took refuge on the instant in the mint; while I stationed myself inside my house-door, which I left ajar, setting a boy at watch upon the street to warn me when the pig should leave the mint. After waiting some time, I grew tired, and my heat cooled. Reflecting, then, that blows are not dealt by contract, and that some disaster might ensue, I resolved to wreak my vengeance by another method. The incident took place about the feast of our San Giovanni, one or two days before; so I composed four verses, and stuck them up in an angle of the church where people go to ease themselves. The verses ran as follows:

"*Here lieth Bernardone, ass and pig,*
Spy, broker, thief, in whom Pandora planted

[1] *That is, the Loggia de' Lanzi, on the great piazza of Florence, where Cellini's statue still stands.*

All her worst evils, and from thence transplanted
Into that brute Buaccio's carcass big."[1]

Both the incident and the verses went the round of the palace, giving the Duke and Duchess much amusement. But, before the man himself knew what I had been up to, crowds of people stopped to read the lines and laughed immoderately at them. Since they were looking towards the mint and fixing their eyes on Bernardone, his son, Maestro Baccio, taking notice of their gestures, tore the paper down with fury. The elder bit his thumb, shrieking threats out with that hideous voice of his, which comes forth through his nose; indeed he made a brave defiance.[2]

XC

When the Duke was informed that the whole of my work for the Perseus could be exhibited as finished, he came one day to look at it. His manner showed clearly that it gave him great satisfaction; but afterwards he turned to some gentlemen attending him and said: "Although this statue seems in our eyes a very fine piece, still it has yet to win the favour of the people. Therefore, my Benvenuto, before you put the very last touches on, I should like you, for my sake, to remove a part of the scaffolding on the side of the piazza, some day toward noon, in order that we may learn what folk think of it. There is no doubt that when it is thrown open to space and light, it will look

[1] *If I understand the obscure lines of the original, Cellini wanted to kill two birds with one stone by this epigram — both Bernardone and his son Baccio. But by Buaccio he generally means Baccio Bandinelli.*

[2] *To bite the thumb at any one was, as students of our old drama know, a sign of challenge or provocation.*

very differently from what it does in this enclosure." I replied with all humility to his Excellency: "You must know, my lord, that it will make more than twice as good a show. Oh, how is it that your most illustrious Excellency has forgotten seeing it in the garden of my house? There, in that large extent of space, it showed so bravely that Bandinello, coming through the garden of the Innocents to look at it, was compelled, in spite of his evil and malignant nature, to praise it, he who never praised aught or any one in all his life! I perceive that your Excellency lends too ready an ear to that fellow." When I had done speaking, he smiled ironically and a little angrily; yet he replied with great kindness: "Do what I ask, my Benvenuto, just to please me."

When the Duke had left, I gave orders to have the screen removed. Yet some trifles of gold, varnish, and various other little finishings were still wanting; wherefore I began to murmur and complain indignantly, cursing the unhappy day which brought me to Florence. Too well I knew already the great and irreparable sacrifice I made when I left France; nor could I discover any reasonable ground for hope that I might prosper in the future with my prince and patron. From the commencement to the middle and the ending, everything that I had done had been performed to my great disadvantage. Therefore, it was with deep ill-humour that I disclosed my statue on the following day.

Now it pleased God that, on the instant of its exposure to view, a shout of boundless enthusiasm went up in commendation of my work, which consoled me

not a little. The folk kept on attaching sonnets to the posts of the door, which was protected with a curtain while I gave the last touches to the statue. I believe that on the same day when I opened it a few hours to the public, more than twenty were nailed up, all of them overflowing with the highest panegyrics. Afterwards, when I once more shut it off from view, every day brought sonnets, with Latin and Greek verses; for the University of Pisa was then in vacation, and all the doctors and scholars kept vying with each other who could praise it best. But what gratified me most, and inspired me with most hope of the Duke's support, was that the artists, sculptors and painters alike, entered into the same generous competition. I set the highest value on the eulogies of that excellent painter Jacopo Pontormo, and still more on those of his able pupil Bronzino, who was not satisfied with merely publishing his verses, but sent them by his lad Sandrino's hand to my own house.[1] They spoke so generously of my performance, in that fine style of his which is most exquisite, that this alone repaid me somewhat for the pain of my long troubles. So then I closed the screen, and once more set myself to finishing my statue.

XCI

The great compliments which this short inspection of my Perseus had elicited from the noble school of Florence, though they were well known to the Duke,

[1] *Jacopo Carrucci da Pontormo was now an old man. He died in* 1558, *aged sixty-five years. Angelo Allori, called Il Bronzino, one of the last fairly good Florentine painters, won considerable distinction as a writer of burlesque poems. He died in* 1571, *aged sixty-nine years. We possess his sonnets on the Perseus.*

did not prevent him from saying: "I am delighted that Benvenuto has had this trifling satisfaction, which will spur him on to the desired conclusion with more speed and diligence. Do not, however, let him imagine that, when his Perseus shall be finally exposed to view from all sides, folk in general will be so lavish of their praises. On the contrary, I am afraid that all its defects will then be brought home to him, and more will be detected than the statue really has. So let him arm himself with patience." These were precisely the words which Bandinello had whispered in the Duke's ears, citing the works of Andrea del Verrocchio, who made that fine bronze of Christ and S. Thomas on the front of Orsammichele; at the same time he referred to many other statues, and dared even to attack the marvellous David of divine Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, accusing it of only looking well if seen in front; finally, he touched upon the multitude of sarcastic sonnets which were called forth by his own Hercules and Cacus, and wound up with abusing the people of Florence. Now the Duke, who was too much inclined to credit his assertions, encouraged the fellow to speak thus, and thought in his own heart that things would go as he had prophesied, because that envious creature Bandinello never ceased insinuating malice. On one occasion it happened that the gallows bird Bernardone, the broker, was present at these conversations, and in support of Bandinello's calumnies, he said to the Duke: "You must remember, prince, that statues on a large scale are quite a different dish of soup from little figures. I do not refuse him the credit of being excellent at statuettes in

miniature. But you will soon see that he cannot succeed in that other sphere of art." To these vile suggestions he added many others of all sorts, plying his spy's office, and piling up a mountain of lies to boot.

XCII

Now it pleased my glorious Lord and immortal God that at last I brought the whole work to completion: and on a certain Thursday morning I exposed it to the public gaze.[1] Immediately, before the sun was fully in the heavens, there assembled such a multitude of people that no words could describe them. All with one voice contended which should praise it most. The Duke was stationed at a window low upon the first floor of the palace, just above the entrance; there, half hidden, he heard everything the folk were saying of my statue. After listening through several hours, he rose so proud and happy in his heart that he turned to his attendant, Messer Sforza, and exclaimed: "Sforza, go and seek out Benvenuto; tell him from me that he has delighted me far more than I expected: say too that I shall reward him in a way which will astonish him; so bid him be of good courage."

In due course, Messer Sforza discharged this glorious embassy, which consoled me greatly. I passed a happy day, partly because of the Duke's message, and also because the folk kept pointing me out as something marvellous and strange. Among the many who did so, were two gentlemen, deputed by the Viceroy of Sicily[2] to our Duke on public business. Now these two agreeable persons met me upon the

[1] *April 27, 1554.* [2] *Don Juan de Vega.*

piazza: I had been shown them in passing, and now they made monstrous haste to catch me up; then, with caps in hand, they uttered an oration so ceremonious, that it would have been excessive for a Pope. I bowed, with every protestation of humility. They meanwhile continued loading me with compliments, until at last I prayed them, for kindness' sake, to leave the piazza in my company, because the folk were stopping and staring at me more than at my Perseus. In the midst of all these ceremonies, they went so far as to propose that I should come to Sicily, and offered to make terms which should content me. They told me how Fra Giovan Agnolo de' Servi[1] had constructed a fountain for them, complete in all its parts, and decorated with a multitude of figures; but it was not in the same good style they recognised in Perseus, and yet they had heaped riches on the man. I would not suffer them to finish all their speeches, but answered: "You give me much cause for wonder, seeking as you do to make me quit the service of a prince who is the greatest patron of the arts that ever lived; and I too here in my own birthplace, famous as the school of every art and science! Oh, if my soul's desire had been set on lucre, I could have stayed in France, with that great monarch Francis, who gave me a thousand golden crowns a year for board, and paid me in addition the price of all my labour. In his service I gained more than four thousand golden crowns the year."

With these and such-like words I cut their cere-

[1] *Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli entered the Order of the Servites in 1530. This did not prevent him from plying his profession of sculptor. The work above alluded to is the fountain at Messina.*

MERCURY
(BASE OF THE PERSEUS)

monies short, thanking them for the high praises they had bestowed upon me, which were indeed the best reward that artists could receive for their labours. I told them they had greatly stimulated my zeal, so that I hoped, after a few years were passed, to exhibit another masterpiece, which I dared believe would yield far truer satisfaction to our noble school of Florence. The two gentlemen were eager to resume the thread of their complimentary proposals, whereupon I, lifting my cap and making a profound bow, bade them a polite farewell.

XCIII

When two more days had passed, and the chorus of praise was ever on the increase, I resolved to go and present myself to the Duke, who said with great good-humour: "My Benvenuto, you have satisfied and delighted me; but I promise that I will reward you in such wise as will make you wonder; and I tell you that I do not mean to delay beyond to-morrow." On hearing this most welcome assurance, I turned all the forces of my soul and body to God, fervently offering up thanks to Him. At the same moment I approached the Duke, and almost weeping for gladness, kissed his robe. Then I added: "O my glorious prince, true and most generous lover of the arts, and of those who exercise them! I entreat your most illustrious Excellency to allow me eight days first to go and return thanks to God; for I alone know what travail I have endured, and that my earnest faith has moved Him to assist me. In gratitude for this and all other marvellous mercies, I should like to travel

eight days on pilgrimage, continually thanking my immortal God, who never fails to help those who call upon Him with sincerity." The Duke then asked me where I wished to go. I answered: "To-morrow I shall set out for Vallombrosa, thence to Camaldoli and the Ermo, afterwards I shall proceed to the Bagni di Santa Maria, and perhaps so far as Sestile, because I hear of fine antiquities to be seen there.[1] Then I shall retrace my steps by San Francesco della Vernia, and, still with thanks to God, return light-hearted to your service." The Duke replied at once with cheerful kindness: "Go and come back again, for of a truth you please me; but do not forget to send a couple of lines by way of memorandum, and leave the rest to me."

I wrote four lines that very day, in which I thanked his Excellency for expected favours, and gave these to Messer Sforza, who placed them in the Duke's hands. The latter took them, and then handed them to Messer Sforza, remarking: "See that you put these lines each day where I can see them; for if Benvenuto comes back and finds I have not despatched his business, I think that he will murder me." Thus laughing, his Excellency asked to be reminded. Messer Sforza reported these precise words to me on the same evening, laughing too and expressing wonder at the great favour shown me by the Duke. He pleasantly added: "Go, Benvenuto, and come again quickly, for indeed I am jealous of you."

[1] *The Ermo is more correctly Eremo, and Vernia is Alvernia.*

XCIV

In God's name then I left Florence, continually singing psalms and prayers in His honour upon all that journey. I enjoyed it extremely; for the season was fine, in early summer, and the country through which I travelled, and which I had never seen before, struck me as marvellously beautiful. Now I had taken with me to serve as guide a young workman in my employ, who came from Bagno, and was called Cesare. Thanks to him, then, I received the kindest hospitality from his father and all his family, among whom was an old man of more than seventy, extremely pleasant in his conversation. He was Cesare's uncle, a surgeon by profession, and a dabbler in alchemy. This excellent person made me observe that the Bagni contained mines of gold and silver, and showed me many interesting objects in the neighbourhood; so that I enjoyed myself as much as I have ever done.

One day, when we had become intimate and he could trust me, he spoke as follows: "I must not omit to tell you a thought of mine, to which his Excellency might with advantage pay attention. It is, that not far from Camaldoli there lies a mountain pass so ill defended, that Piero Strozzi could not only cross it without risk, but might also seize on Poppi[1] unmolested." Not satisfied with this description, he also took a sheet of paper from his pouch, upon which the good old man had drawn the whole country, so that the seriousness of the danger could be manifest upon inspection of the map. I took the design and left

[1] *A village in the Casentino. Piero Strozzi was at this time in Valdichiana.*

Bagno at once, travelling homeward as fast as I could by Prato Magno and San Francesco della Vernia. On reaching Florence, I only stopped to draw off my riding-boots, and hurried to the palace. Just opposite the Badia I met the Duke, who was coming by the palace of the Podesta. When he saw me he gave me a very gracious reception, and showing some surprise, exclaimed: "Why have you come back so quickly; I did not expect you for eight days at least." I answered: "The service of your most illustrious Excellency brings me back, else I should very willingly have stayed some few days longer on my journey through that lovely country." "Well, and what good news have you?" said he. I answered: "Prince, I must talk to you about things of the greatest importance which I have to disclose." So I followed him to the palace, and when we were there, he took me privately into a chamber where we stayed awhile alone together. I then unfolded the whole matter and showed him the little map, with which he seemed to be much gratified. When I told his Excellency that one ought to take measures at once, he reflected for a little while and then said: "I may inform you that we have agreed with the Duke of Urbino that he should guard the pass; but do not speak about it." Then he dismissed me with great demonstrations of good-will, and I went home.

XCV

Next day I presented myself, and, after a few words of conversation, the Duke addressed me cheerfully: "To-morrow, without fail, I mean to despatch your

business; set your mind at rest, then." I, who felt sure that he meant what he said, waited with great impatience for the morrow. When the longed-for day arrived, I betook me to the palace; and as it always happens that evil tidings travel faster than good news, Messer Giacopo Guidi,[1] secretary to his Excellency, called me with his wry mouth and haughty voice; drawing himself up as stiff as a poker, he began to speak to this effect: "The Duke says he wants you to tell him how much you ask for your Perseus." I remained dumbfounded and astonished; yet I quickly replied that it was not my custom to put prices on my work, and that this was not what his Excellency had promised me two days ago. The man raised his voice, and ordered me expressly in the Duke's name, under the penalty of his severe displeasure, to say how much I wanted. Now I had hoped not only to gain some handsome reward, trusting to the mighty signs of kindness shown me by the Duke, but I had still more expected to secure the entire good graces of his Excellency, seeing I never asked for anything, but only for his favour. Accordingly, this wholly unexpected way of dealing with me put me in a fury, and I was especially enraged by the manner which that venomous toad assumed in discharging his commission. I exclaimed that if the Duke gave me ten thousand crowns I should not be paid enough, and that if I had ever thought things would come to this haggling, I should not have settled in his service.

[1] *It appears from a letter written by Guidi to Bandinelli that he hated Cellini, whom he called pessimo mostro di natura. Guidi was made Bishop of Penna in* 1561, *and attended the Council of Trent.*

Thereupon the surly fellow began to abuse me, and I gave it him back again.

Upon the following day, when I paid my respects to the Duke, he beckoned to me. I approached, and he exclaimed in anger: "Cities and great palaces are built with ten thousands of ducats." I rejoined: "Your Excellency can find multitudes of men who are able to build you cities and palaces, but you will not, perhaps, find one man in the world who could make a second Perseus." Then I took my leave without saying or doing anything farther. A few days afterwards the Duchess sent for me, and advised me to put my difference with the Duke into her hands, since she thought she could conduct the business to my satisfaction. On hearing these kindly words I replied that I had never asked any other recompense for my labours than the good graces of the Duke, and that his most illustrious Excellency had assured me of this; it was not needful that I should place in their Excellencies' hands what I had always frankly left to them from the first days when I undertook their service. I farther added that if his most illustrious Excellency gave me but a *crazia*,[1] which is worth five farthings, for my work, I should consider myself contented, provided only that his Excellency did not deprive me of his favour. At these words the Duchess smiled a little and said: "Benvenuto, you would do well to act as I advise you." Then she turned her back and left me. I thought it was my best policy to speak with the humility I have above described; yet it turned out that I had done the worst for myself,

[1] *A small Tuscan coin.*

because, albeit she had harboured some angry feelings toward me, she had in her a certain way of dealing which was generous.

XCVI

About that time I was very intimate with Girolamo degli Albizzi,[1] commissary of the Duke's militia. One day this friend said to me: "O Benvenuto, it would not be a bad thing to put your little difference of opinion with the Duke to rights; and I assure you that if you repose confidence in me, I feel myself the man to settle matters. I know what I am saying. The Duke is getting really angry, and you will come badly out of the affair. Let this suffice; I am not at liberty to say all I know." Now, subsequently to that conversation with the Duchess, I had been told by some one, possibly a rogue, that he had heard how the Duke said upon some occasion which offered itself: "For less than two farthings I will throw Perseus to the dogs, and so our differences will be ended." This, then, made me anxious, and induced me to entrust Girolamo degli Albizzi with the negotiations, telling him anything would satisfy me provided I retained the good graces of the Duke. That honest fellow was excellent in all his dealings with soldiers, especially with the militia, who are for the most part rustics; but he had no taste for statuary, and therefore could not understand its conditions. Consequently, when he spoke to the Duke, he began thus: "Prince, Benvenuto has

[1] *A warm partisan of the Medici. He was a cousin of Maria Salviati, Cosimo's mother. It was rumoured that he caused the historian Francesco Guicciardini's death by poison. We find him godfather to one of Cellini's children.*

placed himself in my hands, and has begged me to recommend him to your Excellency." The Duke replied: "I too am willing to refer myself to you, and shall be satisfied with your decision." Thereupon Girolamo composed a letter, with much skill and greatly to my honour, fixing the sum which the Duke would have to pay me at 3500 golden crowns in gold; and this should not be taken as my proper recompense for such a masterpiece, but only as a kind of gratuity; enough to say that I was satisfied; with many other phrases of like tenor, all of which implied the price which I have mentioned.

The Duke signed this agreement as gladly as I took it sadly. When the Duchess heard, she said: "It would have been better for that poor man if he had placed himself in my hands; I could have got him five thousand crowns in gold." One day, when I went to the palace, she repeated these same words to me in the presence of Messer Alamanno Salviati,[1] and laughed at me a little, saying that I deserved my bad luck.

The Duke gave orders that I should be paid a hundred golden crowns in gold per month, until the sum was discharged; and thus it ran for some months. Afterwards, Messer Antonio de' Nobili, who had to transact the business, began to give me fifty, and sometimes later on he gave me twenty-five, and sometimes nothing. Accordingly, when I saw that the settlement was being thus deferred, I spoke good-humouredly to Messer Antonio, and begged him to explain why he did not complete my payments. He answered in

[1] *This Salviati and the De' Nobili mentioned afterwards occupied a distinguished place in Florentine annals as partisans of the Medici.*

a like tone of politeness; yet it struck me that he exposed his own mind too much. Let the reader judge. He began by saying that the sole reason why he could not go forward regularly with these payments, was the scarcity of money at the palace; but he promised, when cash came in, to discharge arrears. Then he added: "Oh heavens! if I did not pay you, I should be an utter rogue." I was somewhat surprised to hear him speak in that way; yet I resolved to hope that he would pay me when he had the power to do so. But when I observed that things went quite the contrary way, and saw that I was being pillaged, I lost temper with the man, and recalled to his memory hotly and in anger what he had declared he would be if he did not pay me. However, he died; and five hundred crowns are still owing to me at the present date, which is nigh upon the end of 1566.[1] There was also a balance due upon my salary, which I thought would be forgotten, since three years had elapsed without payment. But it so happened that the Duke fell ill of a serious malady, remaining forty-eight hours without passing water. Finding that the remedies of his physicians availed nothing, it is probable that he betook himself to God, and therefore decreed the discharge of all debts to his servants. I too was paid on this occasion, yet I never obtained what still stood out upon my Perseus.

XCVII

I had almost determined to say nothing more about that unlucky Perseus; but a most remarkable inci-

[1] *Cellini began to write his Memoirs in* 1558. *Eight years had therefore now elapsed.*

dent, which I do not like to omit, obliges me to do so; wherefore I must now turn back a bit, to gather up the thread of my narration. I thought I was acting for the best when I told the Duchess that I could not compromise affairs which were no longer in my hands, seeing I had informed the Duke that I should gladly accept whatever he chose to give me. I said this in the hope of gaining favour; and with this manifestation of submissiveness I employed every likely means of pacifying his resentment; for I ought to add that a few days before he came to terms with Albizzi, the Duke had shown he was excessively displeased with me. The reason was as follows: I complained of some abominable acts of injustice done to me by Messer Alfonso Quistelli, Messer Jacopo Polverino of the Exchequer, and more than all by Ser Giovanbattista Brandini of Volterra. When, therefore, I set forth my cause with some vehemence, the Duke flew into the greatest rage conceivable. Being thus in anger, he exclaimed: "This is just the same as with your Perseus, when you asked those ten thousand crowns. You let yourself be blinded by mere cupidity. Therefore I shall have the statue valued, and shall give you what the experts think it worth." To these words I replied with too much daring and a touch of indignation, which is always out of place in dealing with great princes: "How is it possible that my work should be valued at its proper worth when there is not a man in Florence capable of performing it?" That increased his irritation; he uttered many furious phrases, and among them said: "There is in Florence at this day a man well able to make such a statue, and who is

therefore highly capable of judging it." He meant Bandinello, Cavaliere of S. Jacopo.[1] Then I rejoined: "My lord, your most illustrious Excellency gave me the means of producing an important and very difficult masterpiece in the midst of this the noblest school of the world; and my work has been received with warmer praises than any other heretofore exposed before the gaze of our incomparable masters. My chief pride is the commendation of those able men who both understand and practise the arts of design —as in particular Bronzino, the painter; this man set himself to work, and composed four sonnets couched in the choicest style, and full of honour to myself. Perhaps it was his example which moved the whole city to such a tumult of enthusiasm. I freely admit that if sculpture were his business instead of painting, then Bronzino might have been equal to a task like mine. Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, again, whom I am proud to call my master; he, I admit, could have achieved the same success when he was young, but not with less fatigue and trouble than I endured. But now that he is far advanced in years, he would most certainly be found unequal to the strain. Therefore I think I am justified in saying that no man known upon this earth could have produced my Perseus. For the rest, my work has received the greatest reward I could have wished for in this world; chiefly and especially because your most illustrious Excellency not only expressed yourself satisfied, but praised it far more highly than any one beside. What greater and more honourable prize could be desired by me?

[1] *Bandinelli was a Knight of S. James of Compostella.*

I affirm most emphatically that your Excellency could not pay me with more glorious coin, nor add from any treasury a wealth surpassing this. Therefore I hold myself overpaid already, and return thanks to your most illustrious Excellency with all my heart." The Duke made answer: "Probably you think I have not the money to pay you. For my part, I promise you that I shall pay you more for the statue than it is worth." Then I retorted: "I did not picture to my fancy any better recompense from your Excellency; yet I account myself amply remunerated by that first reward which the school of Florence gave me. With this to console me, I shall take my departure on the instant, without returning to the house you gave me, and shall never seek to set my foot in this town again." We were just at S. Felicità, and his Excellency was proceeding to the palace. When he heard these choleric words, he turned upon me in stern anger and exclaimed: "You shall not go; take heed you do not go!" Half terrified, I then followed him to the palace.

On arriving there, his Excellency sent for the Archbishop of Pisa, named De' Bartolini, and Messer Pandolfo della Stufa,[1] requesting them to order Baccio Bandinelli, in his name, to examine well my Perseus and value it, since he wished to pay its exact price. These excellent men went forthwith and performed their embassy. In reply Bandinello said that he had examined the statue minutely, and knew well enough

[1] *Onofrio de' Bartolini was made Archbishop of Pisa in* 1518, *at the age of about seventeen. He was a devoted adherent of the Medici. He was shut up with Clement in S. Angelo, and sent as hostage to the Imperial army. Pandolfo della Stufa had been cup-bearer to Caterina de' Medici while Dauphiness.*

BARTOLINI, ARCHBISHOP OF PISA
(G. CARPI)

what it was worth; but having been on bad terms otherwise with me for some time past, he did not care to be entangled anyhow in my affairs. Then they began to put a gentle pressure on him, saying: "The Duke ordered us to tell you, under pain of his displeasure, that you are to value the statue, and you may have two or three days to consider your estimate. When you have done so, tell us at what price it ought to be paid." He answered that his judgment was already formed, that he could not disobey the Duke, and that my work was rich and beautiful and excellent in execution; therefore he thought sixteen thousand crowns or more would not be an excessive price for it. Those good and courteous gentlemen reported this to the Duke, who was mightily enraged; they also told the same to me. I replied that nothing in the world would induce me to take praise from Bandinello, "seeing that this bad man speaks ill of everybody." My words were carried to the Duke; and that was the reason why the Duchess wanted me to place the matter in her hands. All that I have written is the pure truth. I will only add that I ought to have trusted to her intervention, for then I should have been quickly paid, and should have received so much more into the bargain.

XCVIII

The Duke sent me word by Messer Lelio Torello,[1] his Master of the Rolls,[2] that he wanted me to execute some bas-reliefs in bronze for the choir of S.

[1] *A native of Fano. Cosimo's Auditore, 1539; first Secretary or Grand Chancellor, 1546. He was a great jurist.* [2] *Suo auditore.*

Maria del Fiore. Now the choir was by Bandinello, and I did not choose to enrich his bad work with my labours. He had not indeed designed it, for he understood nothing whatever about architecture; the design was given by Giuliano, the son of that Baccio d'Agnolo, the wood-carver, who spoiled the cupola.[1] Suffice it to say that it shows no talent. For both reasons I was determined not to undertake the task, although I told the Duke politely that I would do whatever his most illustrious Excellency ordered. Accordingly, he put the matter into the hands of the Board of Works for S. Maria del Fiore,[2] telling them to come to an agreement with me; he would continue my allowance of two hundred crowns a year, while they were to supply the rest out of their funds.

In due course I came before the Board, and they told me what the Duke had arranged. Feeling that I could explain my views more frankly to these gentlemen, I began by demonstrating that so many histories in bronze would cost a vast amount of money, which would be totally thrown away, giving all my reasons, which they fully appreciated. In the first place, I said that the construction of the choir was altogether incorrect, without proportion, art, convenience, grace, or good design. In the next place, the bas-reliefs would have to stand too low, beneath the proper line of vision; they would become a place for dogs to piss at, and be always full of ordure. Consequently, I declined positively to execute them. How-

[1] *It was Baccio d'Agnolo who altered Brunelleschi's plan for the cupola. Buonarroti used to say that he made it look like a cage for crickets. His work remained unfinished.*

[2] *Operai di S. Maria del Fiore.*

ever, since I did not wish to throw away the best years of my life, and was eager to serve his most illustrious Excellency, whom I had the sincerest desire to gratify and obey, I made the following proposal. Let the Duke, if he wants to employ my talents, give me the middle door of the cathedral to perform in bronze. This would be well seen, and would confer far more glory on his most illustrious Excellency. I would bind myself by contract to receive no remuneration unless I produced something better than the finest of the Baptistery doors.[1] But if I completed it according to my promise, then I was willing to have it valued, and to be paid one thousand crowns less than the estimate made by experts.

The members of the Board were well pleased with this suggestion, and went at once to report the matter to the Duke, among them being Piero Salviati. They expected him to be extremely gratified with their communication, but it turned out just the contrary. He replied that I was always wanting to do the exact opposite of what he bade me; and so Piero left him without coming to any conclusion. On hearing this, I went off to the Duke at once, who displayed some irritation when he saw me. However, I begged him to condescend to hear me, and he replied that he was willing. I then began from the beginning, and used such convincing arguments that he saw at last how the matter really stood, since I made it evident that he would only be throwing a large sum of money away. Then I softened his temper by suggesting that if his most illustrious Excel-

[1] *He means Ghiberti's second door, in all probability.*

lency did not care to have the door begun, two pulpits had anyhow to be made for the choir, and that these would both of them be considerable works, which would confer glory on his reign; for my part, I was ready to execute a great number of bronze bas-reliefs with appropriate decorations. In this way I brought him round, and he gave me orders to construct the models.

Accordingly I set at work on several models, and bestowed immense pains on them. Among these there was one with eight panels, carried out with far more science than the rest, and which seemed to me more fitted for the purpose. Having taken them several times to the palace, his Excellency sent word by Messer Cesare, the keeper of his wardrobe, that I should leave them there. After the Duke had inspected them, I perceived that he had selected the least beautiful. One day he sent for me, and during our conversation about the models, I gave many reasons why the octagonal pulpit would be far more convenient for its destined uses, and would produce a much finer effect. He answered that he wished me to make it square, because he liked that form better; and thus he went on conversing for some time very pleasantly. I meanwhile lost no opportunity of saying everything I could in the interests of art. Now whether the Duke knew that I had spoken the truth, or whether he wanted to have his own way, a long time passed before I heard anything more about it.

XCIX

About this time the great block of marble arrived which was intended for the Neptune. It had been brought up the Arno, and then by the Grieve[1] to the road at Poggio a Caiano, in order to be carried to Florence by that level way; and there I went to see it. Now I knew very well that the Duchess by her special influence had managed to have it given to Bandinello. No envy prompted me to dispute his claims, but rather pity for that poor unfortunate piece of marble. Observe, by the way, that everything, whatever it may be, which is subject to an evil destiny, although one tries to save it from some manifest evil, falls at once into far worse plight; as happened to this marble when it came into the hands of Bartolommeo Ammanato,[2] of whom I shall speak the truth in its proper place. After inspecting this most splendid block, I measured it in every direction, and on returning to Florence, made several little models suited to its proportions. Then I went to Poggio a Caiano, where the Duke and Duchess were staying, with their son the Prince. I found them all at table, the Duke and Duchess dining in a private apartment; so I entered into conversation with the Prince. We had been speaking for a long while, when the Duke, who was in a room adjacent, heard my voice, and condescended very graciously to send for me. When I presented myself before their Excellencies, the Duchess addressed me in a very

[1] *Instead of the Grieve, which is not a navigable stream, it appears that Cellini ought to have written the Ombrone.*

[2] *This sculptor was born in 1511, and died in 1592. He worked under Bandinelli and Sansovino.*

pleasant tone; and having thus opened the conversation, I gradually introduced the subject of that noble block of marble I had seen. I then proceeded to remark that their ancestors had brought the magnificent school of Florence to such a pitch of excellence only by stimulating competition among artists in their several branches. It was thus that the wonderful cupola and the lovely doors of San Giovanni had been produced, together with those multitudes of handsome edifices and statues which made a crown of artistic glory for their city above anything the world had seen since the days of the ancients. Upon this the Duchess, with some anger, observed that she very well knew what I meant, and bade me never mention that block of marble in her presence, since she did not like it. I replied: "So, then, you do not like me to act as the attorney of your Excellencies, and to do my utmost to ensure your being better served? Reflect upon it, my lady; if your most illustrious Excellencies think fit to open the model for a Neptune to competition, although you are resolved to give it to Bandinello, this will urge Bandinello for his own credit to display greater art and science than if he knew he had no rivals. In this way, my princes, you will be far better served, and will not discourage our school of artists; you will be able to perceive which of us is eager to excel in the grand style of our noble calling, and will show yourselves princes who enjoy and understand the fine arts." The Duchess, in a great rage, told me that I tired her patience out; she wanted the marble for Bandinello, adding: "Ask the Duke; for his Excellency also means Bandinello to have it." When the

Duchess had spoken, the Duke, who had kept silence up to this time, said: "Twenty years ago I had that fine block quarried especially for Bandinello, and so I mean that Bandinello shall have it to do what he likes with it." I turned to the Duke and spoke as follows: "My lord, I entreat your most illustrious Excellency to lend a patient hearing while I speak four words in your service." He told me to say all I wanted, and that he would listen. Then I began: "You will remember, my lord, that the marble which Bandinello used for his Hercules and Cacus was quarried for our incomparable Michel Agnolo Buonarroti. He had made the model for a Samson with four figures, which would have been the finest masterpiece in the whole world; but your Bandinello got out of it only two figures, both ill-executed and bungled in the worst manner; wherefore our school still exclaims against the great wrong which was done to that magnificent block. I believe that more than a thousand sonnets were put up in abuse of that detestable performance; and I know that your most illustrious Excellency remembers the fact very well. Therefore, my powerful prince, seeing how the men to whose care that work was entrusted, in their want of taste and wisdom, took Michel Agnolo's marble away from him, and gave it to Bandinello, who spoilt it in the way the whole world knows, oh! will you suffer this far more splendid block, although it belongs to Bandinello, to remain in the hands of that man who cannot help mangling it, instead of giving it to some artist of talent capable of doing it full justice? Arrange, my lord, that every one who likes shall make a model; have them all exhib-

ited to the school; you then will hear what the school thinks; your own good judgment will enable you to select the best; in this way, finally, you will not throw away your money, nor discourage a band of artists the like of whom is not to be found at present in the world, and who form the glory of your most illustrious Excellency."

The Duke listened with the utmost graciousness; then he rose from table, and turning to me, said: "Go, my Benvenuto, make a model, and earn that fine marble for yourself; for what you say is the truth, and I acknowledge it." The Duchess tossed her head defiantly, and muttered I know not what angry sentences.

I made them a respectful bow and returned to Florence, burning with eagerness to set hands upon my model.

C

When the Duke came to Florence, he sought me at my house without giving me previous notice. I showed him two little models of different design. Though he praised them both, he said that one of them pleased him better than the other; I was to finish the one he liked with care; and this would be to my advantage. Now his Excellency had already seen Bandinello's designs, and those of other sculptors; but, as I was informed by many of his courtiers who had heard him, he commended mine far above the rest. Among other matters worthy of record and of great weight upon this point, I will mention the following. The Cardinal of Santa Fiore was on a visit to Florence, and the Duke took him to Poggio a Caiano. Upon the road,

noticing the marble as he passed, the Cardinal praised it highly, inquiring of his Excellency for what sculptor he intended it. The Duke replied at once: "For my friend Benvenuto, who has made a splendid model with a view to it." This was reported to me by men whom I could trust.

Hearing what the Duke had said, I went to the Duchess, and took her some small bits of goldsmith's work, which greatly pleased her Excellency. Then she asked what I was doing, and I replied: "My lady, I have taken in hand for my pleasure one of the most laborious pieces which have ever been produced. It is a Christ of the whitest marble set upon a cross of the blackest, exactly of the same size as a tall man." She immediately inquired what I meant to do with it. I answered: "You must know, my lady, that I would not sell it for two thousand golden ducats; it is of such difficult execution that I think no man ever attempted the like before; nor would I have undertaken it at the commission of any prince whatever, for fear I might prove inadequate to the task. I bought the marbles with my own money, and have kept a young man some two years as my assistant in the work. What with the stone, the iron frame to hold it up, and the wages, it has cost me above three hundred crowns. Consequently, I would not sell it for two thousand. But if your Excellency deigns to grant me a favour which is wholly blameless, I shall be delighted to make you a present of it. All I ask is that your Excellency will not use your influence either against or for the models which the Duke has ordered to be made of the Neptune for that great block of

marble." She replied with mighty indignation: "So then you value neither my help nor my opposition?" "On the contrary, I value them highly, princess; or why am I offering to give you what I value at two thousand ducats? But I have such confidence in my laborious and well-trained studies, that I hope to win the palm, even against the great Michel Agnolo Buonarroti, from whom and from no one else I have learned all that I know. Indeed, I should be much better pleased to enter into competition with him who knows so much than with those others who know but little of their art. Contending with my sublime master, I could gain laurels in plenty, whereas there are but few to be reaped in a contest with these men." After I had spoken, she rose in a half-angry mood, and I returned to work with all the strength I had upon my model.

When it was finished, the Duke came to see it, bringing with him two ambassadors, one from the Duke of Ferrara, the other from the Signory of Lucca. They were delighted, and the Duke said to those two gentlemen: "Upon my word, Benvenuto deserves to have the marble." Then they both paid me the highest compliments, especially the envoy from Lucca, who was a person of accomplishments and learning.[1] I had retired to some distance in order that they might exchange opinions freely; but when I heard that I was being complimented, I came up, turned to the Duke, and said: "My lord, your most illustrious Excellency ought now to employ another admirable device: decree that every one who likes shall make a model in

[1] *Probably Girolamo Lucchesini.*

clay, exactly of the same size as the marble has to be. In this way you will be able to judge far better who deserves the commission; and I may observe that if your Excellency does not give it to the sculptor who deserves it, this will not wrong the man so much, but will reflect great discredit upon yourself, since the loss and shame will fall on you. On the other hand, if you award it to the one who has deserved it, you will acquire great glory in the first place, and will employ your treasure well, while artists will believe that you appreciate and understand their business." No sooner had I finished speaking than the Duke shrugged his shoulders, and began to move away. While they were taking leave, the ambassador of Lucca said to the Duke: "Prince, this Benvenuto of yours is a terrible man!"[1] The Duke responded: "He is much more terrible than you imagine, and well were it for him if he were a little less terrible; then he would possess at the present moment many things which he has not got." These precise words were reported to me by the envoy, by way of chiding and advising me to change my conduct. I told him that I had the greatest wish to oblige my lord as his affectionate and faithful servant, but that I did not understand the arts of flattery. Several months after this date, Bandinello died; and it was thought that, in addition to his intemperate habits of life, the mortification of having probably to lose the marble contributed to his decline.

[1] *See Introduction, ch. iv., for the meaning of the word terribile.*

CI

Bandinello had received information of the crucifix which, as I have said above, I was now engaged upon. Accordingly he laid his hands at once upon a block of marble, and produced the Pietà which may be seen in the church of the Annunziata. Now I had offered my crucifix to S. Maria Novella, and had already fixed up the iron clamps whereby I meant to fasten it against the wall. I only asked for permission to construct a little sarcophagus upon the ground beneath the feet of Christ, into which I might creep when I was dead. The friars told me that they could not grant this without the consent of their building committee.[1] I replied: "Good brethren, why did not you consult your committee before you allowed me to place my crucifix? Without their leave you suffered me to fix my clamps and other necessary fittings."

On this account I refused to give those fruits of my enormous labours to the church of S. Maria Novella, even though the overseers of the fabric came and begged me for the crucifix. I turned at once to the church of the Annunziata, and when I explained the terms on which I had sought to make a present of it to S. Maria Novella, those virtuous friars of the Nunziata unanimously told me to place it in their church, and let me make my grave according to my will and pleasure. When Bandinello became aware of this, he set to work with great diligence at the completion of his Pietà, and prayed the Duchess to get for him the chapel of the Pazzi for his monument. This he ob-

[1] *I loro Operai.*

tained with some difficulty; and on receiving the permission, he erected his Pietà with great haste. It was not altogether completed when he died.

The Duchess then said that, even as she had protected him in life, so would she protect him in the grave, and that albeit he was dead, I need never try to get that block of marble. Apropos of which, the broker Bernardone, meeting me one day in the country, said that the Duchess had assigned the marble. I replied: "Unhappy piece of stone! In the hands of Bandinello it would certainly have come to grief; but in those of Ammanato its fate is a hundred times worse." Now I had received orders from the Duke to make a clay model, of the same size as the marble would allow; he also provided me with wood and clay, set up a sort of screen in the Loggia where my Perseus stands, and paid me one workman. I went about my business with all diligence, and constructed the wooden framework according to my excellent system. Then I brought the model successfully to a conclusion, without caring whether I should have to execute it in marble, since I knew the Duchess was resolved I should not get the commission. Consequently I paid no heed to that. Only I felt very glad to undergo this labour, hoping to make the Duchess, who was after all a person of intelligence, as indeed I had the means of observing at a later period, repent of having done so great a wrong both to the marble and herself. Giovanni the Fleming also made a model in the cloister of S. Croce; Vinzenzio Danti of Perugia another in the house of Messer Ottaviano de' Medici; the son of Moschino began a third at

Pisa, and Bartolommeo Ammanato a fourth in the Loggia, which we divided between us.[1]

When I had blocked the whole of mine out well, and wanted to begin upon the details of the head, which I had already just sketched out in outline, the Duke came down from the palace, and Giorgetto, the painter,[2] took him into Ammanato's workshed. This man had been engaged there with his own hands several days, in company with Ammanato and all his work-people. While, then, the Duke was inspecting Ammanato's model, I received intelligence that he seemed but little pleased with it. In spite of Giorgetto's trying to dose him with his fluent nonsense, the Duke shook his head, and turning to Messer Gianstefano,[3] exclaimed: "Go and ask Benvenuto if his colossal statue is far enough forward for him to gratify us with a glance at it." Messer Gianstefano discharged this embassy with great tact, and in the most courteous terms. He added that if I did not think my work quite ready to be seen yet, I might say so frankly, since the Duke knew well that I had enjoyed but little assistance for so large an undertaking. I replied that I entreated him to do me the favour of coming; for though my model was not far advanced, yet the in-

[1] *Gian Bologna, or Jean Boullogne, was born at Douai about 1530. He went, while a very young man, to Rome, and then settled at Florence. There he first gained reputation by a Venus which the Prince Francesco bought. The Neptune on the piazza at Bologna, which is his work, may probably have been executed from the model he made in competition upon this occasion. Vincenzo Danti was born at Perugia in 1530. He produced the bronze statue of Pope Julius III., which may still be seen in his native city. Simone Cioli, called Il Mosca, was a very fair sculptor who died in 1554, leaving a son, Francesco, called Il Moschino, who was also a sculptor, and had reached the age of thirty at this epoch. It is therefore to this Moschino probably that Cellini refers above.*

[2] *Giorgio Vasari.*

[3] *Probably Gianstefano Lalli.*

telligence of his Excellency would enable him to comprehend perfectly how it was likely to look when finished. This kindly gentleman took back my message to the Duke, who came with pleasure. No sooner had he entered the enclosure and cast his eyes upon my work, than he gave signs of being greatly satisfied. Then he walked all round it, stopping at each of the four points of view, exactly as the ripest expert would have done. Afterwards he showed by nods and gestures of approval that it pleased him; but he said no more than this: "Benvenuto, you have only to give a little surface to your statue." Then he turned to his attendants, praising my performance, and saying: "The small model which I saw in his house pleased me greatly, but this has far exceeded it in merit."

CII

It pleased God, who rules all things for our good—I mean, for those who acknowledge and believe in Him; such men never fail to gain His protection—that about this time a certain rascal from Vecchio called Piermaria d'Anterigoli, and surnamed Lo Sbietta, introduced himself to me. He is a sheep-grazier; and being closely related to Messer Guido Guidi, the physician, who is now provost of Pescia, I lent ear to his proposals. The man offered to sell me a farm of his for the term of my natural life. I did not care to go and see it, since I wanted to complete the model of my colossal Neptune. There was also no reason why I should visit the property, because Sbietta only sold it to me for the income.[1] This he had noted down at so many

[1] *What Cellini means is that Sbietta was to work the farm, paying Cellini its annual*

bushels of grain, so much of wine, oil, standing corn, chestnuts, and other produce. I reckoned that, as the market then ran, these together were worth something considerably over a hundred golden crowns in gold; and I paid him 650 crowns, which included duties to the state. Consequently, when he left a memorandum written in his own hand, to the effect that he would always keep up these products of the farm in the same values during my lifetime, I did not think it necessary to inspect it. Only I made inquiries, to the best of my ability, as to whether Sbietta and his brother Ser Filippo were well off enough to give me good security. Many persons, of divers sorts, who knew them, assured me that my security was excellent. We agreed to call in Ser Pierfrancesco Bertoldi, notary at the Mercantanzia; and at the very first I handed him Sbietta's memorandum, expecting that this would be recited in the deed. But the notary who drew it up was so occupied with detailing twenty-two boundaries described by Sbietta,[1] that, so far as I can judge, he neglected to include in the contract what the vendor had proposed to furnish. While he was writing, I went on working; and since it took him several hours, I finished a good piece of my Neptune's head.

After the contract was signed and sealed, Sbietta began to pay me the most marked attentions, which I returned in like measure. He made me presents of kids, cheese, capons, fresh curds, and many sorts of fruit, until I began to be almost ashamed of so much

value. It appears from some particulars which follow that the entrate were to be paid in kind.

[1] *The word confini, which I have translated boundaries, may mean limiting conditions.*

DANAE AND PERSEUS
(BASE OF THE PERSEUS)

kindness. In exchange for these courtesies, I always took him from the inn to lodge with me when he came into Florence, often inviting a relative or two who happened to attend him. On one of these occasions he told me with a touch of pleasantry that it was really shameful for me to have bought a farm, and, after the lapse of so many weeks, not yet to have left my business for three days in the hands of my work-people, so as to have come to look at it. His wheedling words and ways induced me to set off, in a bad hour for my welfare, on a visit to him. Sbietta received me in his own house with such attentions and such honours as a duke might covet. His wife caressed me even more than he did; and these excellent relations continued between us until the plans which he and his brother Ser Filippo had in mind were fully matured.

CIII

Meanwhile I did not suspend my labours on the Neptune, which was now quite blocked out upon an excellent system, undiscovered and unknown before I used it. Consequently, although I knew I should not get the marble for the reasons above narrated, I hoped to have it soon completed, and to display it on the piazza simply for my satisfaction.

It was a warm and pleasant season; and this, together with the attentions of those two rascals, disposed me to set out one Wednesday, which happened to be a double holiday, for my country-house at Trespiano.[1] Having spent some time over an excellent

[1] *From Cellini's Ricordi it appears that he bought a farm at this village, north-east of Florence, on October 26, 1548. In 1556 he also purchased land there.*

lunch, it was past twenty o'clock when I reached Vicchio. There, at the town-gate, I met Ser Filippo, who appeared to know already whither I was bound. He loaded me with attentions, and took me to Sbietta's house, where I found that fellow's strumpet of a wife, who also overwhelmed me with caresses. I gave the woman a straw hat of the very finest texture, the like of which she told me she had never seen. Still, up to this time, Sbietta had not put in his appearance.

Toward the end of the afternoon we all sat down to supper in excellent spirits. Later on, they gave me a well-appointed bedroom, where I went to rest in a bed of the most perfect cleanliness. Both of my servants, according to their rank, were equally well treated. On the morrow, when I rose, the same attentions were paid me. I went to see my farm, which pleased me much; and then I had some quantities of grain and other produce handed over. But when I returned to Vicchio, the priest Ser Filippo said to me: "Benvenuto, do not be uneasy; although you have not found here quite everything you had the right to look for, yet put your mind to rest; it will be amply made up in the future, for you have to deal with honest folk. You ought, by the way, to know that we have sent that labourer away, because he was a scoundrel." The labourer in question bore the name of Mariano Rosegli; and this man now kept frequently repeating in my ear: "Look well after yourself; in the end you will discover which of us here is the greatest villain." The country-fellow, when he spoke those words, smiled with an evil kind of sneer, and jerked his head as though to say: "Only go up there, and you will

find out for yourself."

I was to some extent unfavourably influenced by these hints, yet far from forming a conception of what actually happened to me. So, when I returned from the farm, which is two miles distant from Vicchio, toward the Alpi,[1] I met the priest, who was waiting for me with his customary politeness. We then sat down together to breakfast; it was not so much a dinner as an excellent collation. Afterwards I took a walk through Vicchio—the market had just opened—and noticed how all the inhabitants fixed their eyes upon me, as on something strange. This struck me particularly in the case of a worthy old man, who has been living for many years at Vicchio, and whose wife bakes bread for sale. He owns some good property at the distance of about a mile; however, he prefers this mode of life, and occupies a house which belongs to me in the town of Vicchio. This had been consigned to me together with the farm above mentioned, which bears the name of Della Fonte. The worthy old man spoke as follows: "I am living in your house, and when it falls due I shall pay you your rent; but if you want it earlier, I will act according to your wishes. You may reckon on never having any disputes with me." While we were thus talking I noticed that he looked me hard in the face, which compelled me to address him thus: "Prithee, tell me, friend Giovanni, why you have more than once stared at me in that way?" He replied: "I am quite willing to tell you, if, being the man of worth I take you for, you will promise not to say that I have told you." I gave the promise and he proceeded: "You

[1] *The Alpi are high mountain pastures in the Apennines.*

must know then that that worthless priest, Ser Filippo, not many days since, went about boasting of his brother Sbietta's cleverness, and telling how he had sold his farm to an old man for his lifetime, and that the purchaser could hardly live the year out. You have got mixed up with a set of rogues; therefore take heed to living as long as you are able, and keep your eyes open, for you have need of it. I do not choose to say more."

CIV

During my promenade through the market, I met Giovan Battista Santini, and he and I were taken back to supper by the priest. As I have related above, we supped at the early hour of twenty, because I made it known that I meant to return to Trespiano. Accordingly they made all ready; the wife of Sbietta went bustling about in the company of one Cecchino Buti, their knave of all work. After the salads had been mixed and we were preparing to sit down to table, that evil priest, with a certain nasty sort of grin, exclaimed: "I must beg you to excuse me, for I cannot sup with you; the reason is that some business of importance has occurred which I must transact for my brother Sbietta. In his absence I am obliged to act for him." We all begged him to stay, but could not alter his determination; so he departed and we began our supper. After we had eaten the salads on some common platters, and they were preparing to serve the boiled meat, each guest received a porringer for himself. Santini, who was seated opposite me at table, exclaimed: "Do you notice that the crockery they give

you is different from the rest? Did you ever see anything handsomer?" I answered that I had not noticed it. He also prayed me to invite Sbietta's wife to sit down with us; for she and that Cecchino Buti kept running hither and thither in the most extraordinary fuss and hurry. At last I induced the woman to join us; when she began to remonstrate: "You do not like my victuals, since you eat so little." I answered by praising the supper over and over again, and saying that I had never eaten better or with heartier appetite. Finally, I told her that I had eaten quite enough. I could not imagine why she urged me so persistently to eat. After supper was over, and it was past the hour of twenty-one, I became anxious to return to Trespiano, in order that I might recommence my work next morning in the Loggia. Accordingly I bade farewell to all the company, and having thanked our hostess, took my leave.

I had not gone three miles before I felt as though my stomach was on fire, and suffered such pain that it seemed a thousand years till I arrived at Trespiano. However, it pleased God that I reached it after nightfall with great toil, and immediately proceeded to my farm, where I went to bed. During the night I got no sleep, and was constantly disturbed by motions of my bowels. When day broke, feeling an intense heat in the rectum, I looked eagerly to see what this might mean, and found the cloth covered with blood. Then in a moment I conceived that I had eaten something poisonous, and racked my brains to think what it could possibly have been. It came back to my memory how Sbietta's wife had set before me plates, and

porringers, and saucers different from the others, and how that evil priest, Sbietta's brother, after giving himself such pains to do me honour, had yet refused to sup with us. Furthermore, I remembered what the priest had said about Sbietta's doing such a fine stroke of business by the sale of his farm to an old man for life, who could not be expected to survive a year. Giovanni Sardella had reported these words to me. All things considered, I made my mind up that they must have administered a dose of sublimate in the sauce, which was very well made and pleasant to the taste, inasmuch as sublimate produces all the symptoms I was suffering from. Now it is my custom to take but little sauce or seasoning with my meat, excepting salt; and yet I had eaten two moderate mouthfuls of that sauce because it was so tasteful. On further thinking, I recollected how often that wife of Sbietta had teased me in a hundred ways to partake more freely of the sauce. On these accounts I felt absolutely certain that they had given me sublimate in that very dish.

CV

Albeit I was suffering so severely, I forced myself to work upon my Colossus in the Loggia; but after a few days I succumbed to the malady and took to my bed. No sooner did the Duchess hear that I was ill, than she caused the execution of that unlucky marble to be assigned to Bartolommeo Ammanato.[1] He sent word

[1] *What follows has been so carefully erased, possibly by Cellini's own hand, in the autograph, that it is illegible. Laura Battiferra, Ammanato's wife, was a woman of irreproachable character, whom Cellini himself praised in a sonnet.*

to me through Messer . . . . living in . . . . Street, that I might now do what I liked with my model since he had won the marble. This Messer . . . . was one of the lovers of Bartolommeo Ammanato's wife; and being the most favoured on account of his gentle manners and discretion, Ammanato made things easy for him. There would be much to say upon this topic; however, I do not care to imitate his master, Bandinello, who always wandered from the subject in his talk. Suffice it to say that I told Ammanato's messenger I had always imagined it would turn out thus; let the man strain himself to the utmost in proof of gratitude to Fortune for so great a favour so undeservedly conferred on him by her.

All this while I stayed with sorry cheer in bed, and was attended by that most excellent man and physician Maestro Francesco da Montevarchi. Together with him Maestro Raffaello de' Pilli undertook the surgical part of my case, forasmuch as the sublimate had so corroded the intestines that I was unable to retain my motions. When Maestro Francesco saw that the poison had exerted all its strength, being indeed insufficient in quantity to overcome my vigorous constitution, he said one day: "Benvenuto, return thanks to God, for you have won the battle. Have no anxiety, since I mean to cure you in spite of the rogues who sought to work your ruin." Maestro Raffaello then put in: "This will be one of the finest and most difficult cures which was ever heard of; for I can tell you, Benvenuto, that you swallowed a good mouthful of sublimate." Thereupon Maestro Francesco took him up and said: "It may possibly have been some venomous

caterpillar." I replied: "I know for certain what sort of poison it was, and who gave it to me;" upon which we all were silent. They attended me more than six full months, and I remained more than a whole year before I could enjoy my life and vigour.

CVI

At this time[1] the Duke went to make his triumphal entry into Siena, and Ammanato had gone there some months earlier to construct the arches. A bastard of his, who stayed behind in the Loggia, removed the cloths with which I kept my model of Neptune covered until it should be finished. As soon as I knew this, I complained to Signor Don Francesco, the Duke's son, who was kindly disposed toward me, and told him how they had disclosed my still imperfect statue; had it been finished, I should not have given the fact a thought. The Prince replied with a threatening toss of his head: "Benvenuto, do not mind your statue having been uncovered, because these men are only working against themselves; yet if you want me to have it covered up, I will do so at once." He added many other words in my honour before a crowd of gentlemen who were there. I then begged his Excellency to give me the necessary means for finishing it, saying that I meant to make a present of it together with the little model to his Highness. He replied that he gladly accepted both gifts, and that he would have all the conveniences I asked for put at my disposal. Thus, then, I fed upon this trifling mark of favour, which, in fact, proved the salvation of my life; for

[1] *October* 28, 1560.

having been overwhelmed by so many evils and such great annoyances all at one fell swoop, I felt my forces failing; but this little gleam of encouragement inspired me with some hope of living.

CVII

A year had now passed since I bought the farm of Della Fonte from Sbietta. In addition to their attempt upon my life by poisoning and their numerous robberies, I noticed that the property yielded less than half what had been promised. Now, in addition to the deeds of contract, I had a declaration written by Sbietta's own hand, in which he bound himself before witnesses to pay me over the yearly income I have mentioned. Armed with these documents, I had recourse to the Lords Counsellors. At that time Messer Alfonso Quistello was still alive and Chancellor of the Exchequer; he sat upon the Board, which included Averardo Serristori and Federigo de' Ricci. I cannot remember the names of all of them, but I know that one of the Alessandri was a member. Suffice it to say, the counsellors of that session were men of weight and worth. When I had explained my cause to the magistracy, they all with one voice ruled that Sbietta should give me back my money, except Federigo de' Ricci, who was then employing the fellow himself; the others unanimously expressed sorrow to me that Federigo de' Ricci prevented them from despatching the affair. Averardo Serristori and Alessandri in particular made a tremendous stir about it, but Federigo managed to protect matters until the magistracy went out of office; whereupon Serristori, meeting me one

morning after they had come out upon the Piazza dell' Annunziata, cried aloud, without the least regard to consequences: "Federigo de' Ricci has been so much stronger than all of us put together that you have been massacred against our will." I do not intend to say more upon this topic, since it would be too offensive to the supreme authorities of state; enough that I was cruelly wronged at the will of a rich citizen, only because he made use of that shepherd-fellow.

CVIII

The Duke was staying at Livorno, where I went to visit him in order merely to obtain release from his service. Now that I felt my vigour returning, and saw that I was used for nothing, it pained me to lose time which ought to have been spent upon my art. I made my mind up, therefore, went to Livorno, and found my prince, who received me with exceeding graciousness. Now I stayed there several days, and went out riding daily with his Excellency. Consequently I had excellent opportunities for saying all I wanted, since it was the Duke's custom to ride four miles out of Livorno along the sea-coast to the point where he was erecting a little fort. Not caring to be troubled with a crowd of people, he liked me to converse with him. So then, on one of these occasions, having observed him pay me some remarkable attentions, I entered into the affair of Sbietta and spoke as follows: "My lord, I should like to narrate to your most illustrious Excellency a very singular incident, which will explain why I was prevented from finishing that clay model of Neptune on which I was working in the Log-

gia. Your Excellency must know that I bought a farm for my life from Sbietta—" To cut the matter short, I related the whole story in detail, without contaminating truth with falsehood. Now when I came to the poison, I remarked that if I had ever proved an acceptable servant in the sight of his most illustrious Excellency, he ought not to punish Sbietta or those who administered the poison, but rather to confer upon them some great benefit, inasmuch as the poison was not enough to kill me, but had exactly sufficed to cleanse me of a mortal viscosity from which I suffered in my stomach and intestines. "The poison," quoth I, "worked so well, that whereas, before I took it, I had perhaps but three or four years to live, I verily believe now that it has helped me to more than twenty years by bettering my constitution. For this mercy I return thanks to God with greater heartiness than ever; and this proves that a proverb I have sometimes heard spoken is true, which runs as follows:

'*God send us evil that may work us good.*'"

The Duke listened to my story through more than two miles of travel, keeping his attention fixed, and only uttering: "Oh, the villains!" I said, in conclusion, that I felt obliged to them, and opened other and more cheerful subjects of conversation.

I kept upon the look-out for a convenient day; and when I found him well disposed for what I wanted, I entreated his most illustrious Excellency to dismiss me in a friendly spirit, so that I might not have to waste the few years in which I should be fit to do anything. As for the balance due upon my Perseus, he

might give this to me when he judged it opportune. Such was the pith of my discourse: but I expanded it with lengthy compliments, expressing my gratitude toward his most illustrious Excellency. To all this he made absolutely no answer, but rather seemed to have taken my communication ill. On the following day Messer Bartolommeo Concino,[1] one of the Duke's secretaries, and among the chiefest, came to me, and said with somewhat of a bullying air: "The Duke bids me tell you that if you want your dismissal, he will grant it; but if you choose work, he will give you plenty: God grant you may have the power to execute all he orders." I replied that I desired nothing more than work to do, and would rather take it from the Duke than from any man whatever in the world. Whether they were popes, emperors, or kings, I should prefer to serve his most illustrious Excellency for a halfpenny than any of the rest of them for a ducat. He then remarked: "If that is your mind, you and he have struck a bargain without the need of further speech. So, then, go back to Florence, and be unconcerned; rely on the Duke's good-will towards you." Accordingly I made my way again to Florence.

CIX

Immediately after my arrival, there came to visit me a certain Raffaellone Scheggia, whose trade was that of a cloth-of-gold weaver. He began thus: "My Benvenuto, I should like to reconcile you with Piermaria Sbietta." I replied that nobody could settle the affairs

[1] *This man was the son of a peasant at Terranuova, in Valdarno. He acquired great wealth and honour at the court of Duke Cosimo, and was grandfather of the notorious Maréchal d'Ancre.*

between us except the Lords Counsellors; in the present court Sbietta would not have a Federigo de' Ricci to support him, a man willing, for the bribe of a couple of fatted kids, without respect of God or of his honour, to back so infamous a cause and do so vile a wrong to sacred justice. When I had uttered these words, and many others to the like effect, Raffaello kept on blandly urging that it was far better to eat a thrush in peace than to bring a fat capon to one's table, even though one were quite sure to get it, after a hot fight. He further reminded me that lawsuits had a certain way of dragging on, and that I could employ the time far better upon some masterpiece of art, which would bring me not only greater honour, but greater profit to boot. I knew that he was speaking the mere truth, and began to lend ear to his arguments. Before long, therefore, we arranged the matter in this way: Sbietta was to rent the farm from me at seventy golden crowns in gold the year during the whole term of my natural life. But when we came to the contract, which was drawn up by Ser Giovanni, son of Ser Matteo da Falgano, Sbietta objected that the terms we had agreed on would involve our paying the largest duties to the revenue. He was not going to break his word; therefore we had better draw the lease for five years, to be renewed on the expiry of the term. He undertook to abide by his promise to renew, without raising further litigation. That rascal, the priest, his brother, entered into similar engagements; and so the lease was drawn for five years.

CX

Though I want to enter upon other topics, and to leave all this rascality alone awhile, I am forced to narrate what happened at the termination of this five years' contract. Instead of abiding by their promised word, those two rogues declared they meant to give me up my farm, and would not keep it any longer upon lease. I not unnaturally complained, but they retorted by ostentatiously unfolding the deed; and I found myself without any defence against their chicanery. When it came to this, I told them that the Duke and Prince of Florence would not suffer folk to be so infamously massacred in their cities. That menace worked so forcibly upon their minds that they once more despatched Raffaello Scheggia, the same man who negotiated the former arrangement. I must add that they professed their unwillingness to pay the same rent of seventy crowns as during the five years past, while I replied that I would not take a farthing less. So then Raffaello came to look me up, and spoke to this effect: "My Benvenuto, you know that I am acting in your interest. Now these men have placed themselves entirely in my hands;" and he showed me a writing to this effect signed by them. Not being aware that he was their close relative, I thought he would be an excellent arbitrator, and therefore placed myself also absolutely in his hands. This man of delicate honour then came one evening about a half hour after sunset, in the month of August, and induced me with the strongest pressure to draw up the contract then and there. He did so because he knew that if he

waited till the morning, the deceit he wished to practise on me must have failed. Accordingly the deed was executed, to the effect that they were to pay me a rent of sixty-five crowns, in two half-yearly instalments, during the term of my natural life. Notwithstanding I rebelled against it, and refused to sit down quietly under the injustice, all was to no purpose, Raffaello exhibited my signature, and every one took part against me. At the same time he went on protesting that he acted altogether in my interest and as my supporter. Neither the notary nor any others who heard of the affair, knew that he was a relative of those two rogues; so they told me I was in the wrong. Accordingly, I was forced to yield with the best grace I could; and what I have now to do is to live as long as I can manage.

Close after these events, that is to say, in the December of 1566 following, I made another blunder. I bought half of the farm Del Poggio from them, or rather from Sbietta, for two hundred crowns.[1] It marches with my property of La Fonte. Our terms were that the estate should revert at the term of three years,[2] and I gave them a lease of it. I did this for the best; but I should have to dilate too long upon the topic were I to enter into all the rascalities they practised on me. Therefore, I refer my cause entirely to God, knowing that He hath ever defended me from those who sought to do me mischief.

[1] *Scudi di moneta, not d'oro.*

[2] *This seems to be the meaning of comprare con riservo di tre anni. Cellini elsewhere uses the equivalent term patto resolutivo. See Tassi, vol. ii. p. 583.*

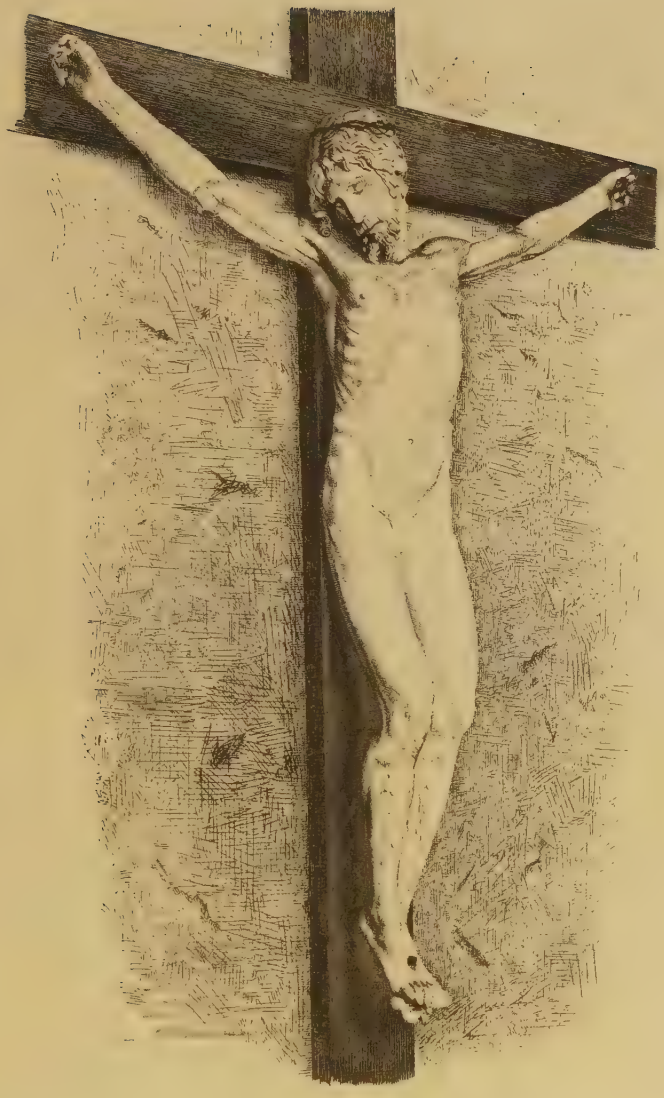
CXI

Having quite completed my crucifix, I thought that if I raised it to some feet above the ground, it would show better than it did upon a lower level. After I had done so, it produced a far finer effect than even it had made before, and I was greatly satisfied. So then I began to exhibit it to every one who had the mind to see it.

As God willed, the Duke and the Duchess heard about it. On their arrival then from Pisa, both their Excellencies arrived one day quite unexpectedly, attended by all the nobles of their court, with the sole purpose of inspecting my crucifix. They were so much delighted, that each of these princes lavished endless praises on it, and all the lords and gentlefolk of their suites joined in chorus. Now, when I saw how greatly they were taken with the piece, I began to thank them with a touch of humour, saying that, if they had not refused me the marble for the Neptune, I should never have undertaken so arduous a task, the like whereof had not been attempted by any sculptor before me. "It is true," I added, "that this crucifix has cost me hours of unimaginable labour; yet they have been well expended, especially now when your most illustrious Excellencies have bestowed such praises on it. I cannot hope to find possessors of it worthier than you are; therefore I gladly present it to you as a gift."[1]

After speaking to this effect, I prayed them, before

[1] *The Duchess would not take the crucifix as a gift. The Duke bought it for fifteen hundred golden crowns, and transferred it to the Pitti in 1565. It was given by the Grand Duke Francesco in 1576 to Philip II., who placed it in the Escorial, where it now is.*



CRUCIFIX BY CELLINI
(ESCORIAL)

they took their leave, to deign to follow me into the ground-floor of my dwelling. They rose at once with genial assent, left the workshop, and on entering the house, beheld my little model of the Neptune and the fountain, which had not yet been seen by the Duchess. This struck her with such force that she raised a cry of indescribable astonishment, and turning to the Duke, exclaimed: "Upon my life, I never dreamed it could be one-tenth part so beautiful!" The Duke replied by repeating more than once: "Did I not tell you so?" Thus they continued talking together for some while greatly in my honour. Afterwards the Duchess called me to her side; and when she had uttered many expressions of praise which sounded like excuses (they might indeed have been construed into asking for forgiveness), she told me that she should like me to quarry a block of marble to my taste, and then to execute the work. In reply to these gracious speeches I said that, if their most illustrious Excellencies would provide me with the necessary accommodations, I should gladly for their sakes put my hand to such an arduous undertaking. The Duke responded on the moment: "Benvenuto, you shall have all the accommodations you can ask for; and I will myself give you more besides, which shall surpass them far in value." With these agreeable words they left me, and I remained highly satisfied.

CXII

Many weeks passed, but of me nothing more was spoken. This neglect drove me half mad with despair. Now about that time the Queen of France sent Mes-

ser Baccio del Bene to our Duke for a loan of money, which the Duke very graciously supplied, as rumour went. Messer Baccio del Bene and I had been intimate friends in former times; so when we renewed our acquaintance in Florence, we came together with much mutual satisfaction. In course of conversation he related all the favours shown him by his most illustrious Excellency, and asked me what great works I had in hand. In reply, I narrated the whole story of the Neptune and the fountain, and the great wrong done me by the Duchess. He responded by telling me how her Majesty of France was most eager to complete the monument of her husband Henri II., and how Daniello da Volterra[1] had undertaken a great equestrian statue in bronze, but the time had already elapsed in which he promised to perform it, and that a multitude of the richest ornaments were required for the tomb. If, then, I liked to return to France and occupy my castle, she would supply me with all the conveniences I could ask for, provided only I cared to enter her service. These proposals he made on the part of the Queen. I told Messer Baccio to beg me from the Duke; if his most illustrious Excellency was satisfied, I should very willingly return to France. He answered cheerfully: "We will travel back together!" and considered the affair settled. Accordingly, next day, in course of conversation with the Duke, he alluded to myself, declaring that if his Excellency had no objection, the Queen would take me into her employ. The Duke replied without a moment's hesitation: "Ben-

[1] *This painter is chiefly famous for his "Descent from the Cross" in the Church of the Trinità de' Monti at Rome. He died in* 1566.

venuto's ability in his profession is known to the whole world; but at the present time he does not care to go on working." Then they touched on other topics; and upon the day following I called on Messer Baccio, who reported what had passed between them. Then I lost all patience, and exclaimed: "Oh, me! His most illustrious Excellency gave me nothing to do, while I was bringing to perfection one of the most difficult masterpieces ever executed in this world; and it stands me in more than two hundred crowns, which I have paid out of my poverty! Oh, what could I not have done if his Excellency had but set me to work! I tell you in pure truth, that they have done me a great wrong!" The good-natured gentleman repeated to the Duke what I had answered. The Duke told him we were joking, and that he wanted me for his own service. The result was that in my irritation I more than once made up my mind to make off without asking leave. However, the Queen preferred to drop negotiations, in fear of displeasing the Duke; and so I remained here, much to my regret.

CXIII

About that time the Duke went on a journey, attended by all his court and all his sons, except the prince, who was in Spain. They travelled through the Sienese Maremma, and by this route he reached Pisa. The poison from the bad air of those marshes first attacked the Cardinal, who was taken with a pestilential fever after a few days, and died at the end of a brief illness. He was the Duke's right eye, handsome and good, and

his loss was most severely felt. I allowed several days to elapse, until I thought their tears were dried, and then I betook myself to Pisa.

NOTES

NOTES

ON THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI AFTER THE YEAR 1562

CELLINI'S autobiography breaks off abruptly just at the point when it was acquiring considerable importance to the historian. Students of Florentine annals will hardly need to be reminded that in the autumn of 1562 the Cardinal de' Medici died suddenly and somewhat mysteriously upon a hunting expedition in the Pisan marshes, while Don Garzia de' Medici followed him to the grave after the interval of a few days at Pisa. Popular rumour asserted that the Cardinal had been mortally wounded in a quarrel by his brother Garzia, and that their father, the Grand Duke, had stabbed the latter in a fit of murderous rage. The death of the Grand Duchess Leonora, which took place shortly afterwards, was ascribed, not to her natural sorrow and to her own physical infirmities, but to the horror inspired in her by these domestic crimes.

There is little doubt that all three deaths were natural; and Cellini's interrupted account of the occurrences very materially confirms this view. It must, however, be regretted that we have lost the narrative of his visit to Pisa. The intimate relations which up to this time he maintained with the Grand Ducal family, gave him abundant opportunities for discerning the truth in matters which concerned them privately; nor can it be doubted that the picture he would probably have drawn of their domestic affliction must have been dramatically impressive.

Cellini died upon the 13th of February 1570, according to the old Florentine style, or in 1571, according to our modern reckoning. Therefore somewhat more than seven years of life remained for him after the termination of his *Memoirs*. The events of those years may be to a certain extent recovered from his private memoranda or *Ricordi*, his

petitions to the Medicean princes and to the Soprasindachi of Florence, and a few official documents which mention him.

Some important incidents of his life at Florence before the year 1562, omitted for unknown reasons in his autobiography, have also to be recorded. We find that at the close of 1554 he was admitted to the Florentine nobility.[1] In the year 1556 he was twice imprisoned; on what charges cannot be precisely ascertained, though passages in his poems and petitions make it probable that on one at least of these occasions, he was accused of criminal immorality.[2] On the 2nd of June 1558 he took the first tonsure, without however engaging himself irrevocably to the ecclesiastical state.[3] From those preliminary vows he was released in 1560, and about four years later he married a woman who is named Piera di Salvadore Parigi in one of his *Ricordi*.[4] She is supposed to have been the same who behaved so genially at the time when the Perseus was being cast, and who nursed him through the illness following his visit to Sbietta in 1559. This identification is, however, to say the least, very dubious. The genealogical table printed at the close of these notes will inform the reader concerning the births and deaths of Cellini's children.

During the year 1559 an act of open-handed charity involved Cellini in a series of troublesome entanglements, which deserve to be briefly narrated. A certain woman called Dorotea, the wife of Domenico Parigi, surnamed Sputasenni, had long served him for a model. Her husband was a worthless fellow, who, being imprisoned in the Stinche for some quarrel, left his family in extreme indigence.[5] Cellini received Dorotea and her son Antonio

[1] *Bianchi, p.* 592. [2] *Bianchi, p.* 593. [3] *Bianchi, p.* 596. [4] *Bianchi, p.* 601.
[5] *The story may be read in Cellini's petition to the Grand Duke, Bianchi, Doc. i. of Serie Prima, p.* 542.

and her daughter Margherita into his own house upon the 8th of July. There he supported them, at the same time paying for Sputasenni's board in prison, until the 25th of December, when the man was released. His kindness to the family did not stop here. Eleven months later, that is to say, in November 1560, he adopted the boy Antonio Sputasenni, giving him the name of Nutino (a diminutive of Benvenutino), and settling upon him the sum of one thousand crowns, which were to be paid when he reached the age of eighteen, provided he adopted the profession of a sculptor.[1] This boy turned out stupid, ill-conditioned, and intractable. Cellini found that it was useless to educate him for any art or trade. Nothing remained but to make him a friar; this being the natural refuge for incorrigible idlers and incapable ne'er-do-weels. Accordingly he was established among the novices of *fratini* in the Franciscan convent of the Nunziata. There he received the name of Lattanzio; but it does not appear that he pledged himself to enter into religion.[2] Cellini continued to exercise parental authority and supervision over the youth; and one of his chief anxieties was to keep him from the contaminating society of his father. This good-for-nothing fellow had been residing for some years in Pisa; but shortly before 1569 he returned with his wife to Florence, complained loudly that his son was being educated for a friar, and used all his influence to defeat the plans Cellini had formed for Lattanzio's future. Cellini forbade Lattanzio to visit his father. The novice disobeyed this order; and early in the spring of 1569 Cellini formally disinherited his adopted son, and washed his hands of the affair.[3] He was not, however, easily quit of these troublesome protégés. In 1570 Domenico

[1] *See Tassi, vol. iii. p. 89.*

[2] *He is afterwards described as "lo sfratato Fra Lattanzio" by the judges who decided a case in his favour, June 2, 1570. Bianchi, p. 541.*

[3] *The whole story may best be read in Cellini's own Ricordi on the subject. Bianchi, Doc. xliii. of Serie Prima, p. 537.*

Sputasenni instituted a suit against Cellini, in order to compel him to maintain the young man, whom we must now again call Antonio, and to secure a portion of the adoptive father's estate in settlement. The action went against the defendant, who was sentenced on the 2nd of June 1570 to provide for Antonio's support.[1] Against this verdict Cellini appealed to the Grand Duke. It appears from the rescript to his petition that his estate was eventually freed from all claims on the part of Antonio Sputasenni; but Cellini was obliged to pay a yearly allowance during his own lifetime to the young man.[2]

During the whole of this transaction nothing emerges to Cellini's discredit; nor is there any hint that Antonio Sputasenni was regarded as his illegitimate child. On the contrary, the lad is described as "figliuolo suo adottivo e legittimo e naturale di Domenico d'Antonio Sputasenni di Firenze" in the adverse sentence of June 2, 1570. We have, therefore, the right to assume that all Cellini's dealings with the Sputasenni family were prompted by simple kind-heartedness. This, like his natural affection for his sister and nieces, which determined him to quit the service of King Francis, is an amiable trait in his mixed character.[3]

In the month of March 1561 (new style) Cellini received from the Grand Duke a donation of his house in the Via del Rosaio.[4] The terms in which Cosimo de' Medici mentions his merit as "an artist in bronze-casting and a sculptor resplendent with incomparable glory," prove that he was at this time high in favour with his patron. The gift is con-

[1] *Bianchi, p.* 541.

[2] *See Cellini's petition, Bianchi, p.* 542; *Tassi, vol. iii. p.* 188; *for the decree of July* 11, 1570, *compelling him to maintain Antonio during his own lifetime.*

[3] *It ought to be mentioned that the woman Cellini married before* 1565, *Piera di Salvadore Parigi, bore the same family name as these Sputasenni.*

[4] *See Carpani, vol. ii. p.* 462; *Tassi, vol. iii. p.* 108. *This document is omitted by Molini and Bianchi. But I see no reason to doubt its genuineness.*

firmed, with reversion to his heirs, by a formal deed of February 5, 1563 (new style).[1]

The documents relating to Cellini during the last decade of his life prove that he was constantly in litigation with the Grand Duke regarding payments due to him for the Perseus and other works of art. It appears from them that, whether through his own neglect of art or through the indifference of his princely patrons, he ceased to be employed on undertakings of public importance. At the same time we gather from the same series of papers that he engaged in business speculations with Florentine goldsmiths, and that he invested some capital in purchases of land. The state of his health, which was never robust after the illness of 1559–60, combined with domestic cares, seems to have contributed together with old age to a suspension of his active faculties.

When the Florentines prepared their splendid obsequies for Michel Angelo Buonarroti in the Church of Sta. Croce, upon the 16th of March 1564, Cellini was chosen together with Ammanati to represent the art of Sculpture, while Bronzino and Vasari walked as representatives of Painting in the funeral procession.[2] Vasari in his Life of Michel Angelo relates that Cellini was prevented by ill-health from attending; and this must have been a sore disappointment to one who professed so sincere a devotion to the last great master of Italian art. Indeed, during the closing years of his existence, Cellini suffered from many pressing maladies, the worst and most persistent of which seems to have been the gout. After making several wills during the four previous years, he dictated his last testament on the 18th of December 1570. Codicils were added successively upon the 12th of January, 3rd of February, and 6th of February 1571; and on the 13th of that month he breathed his last. Upon the 15th he was buried with public honours in the

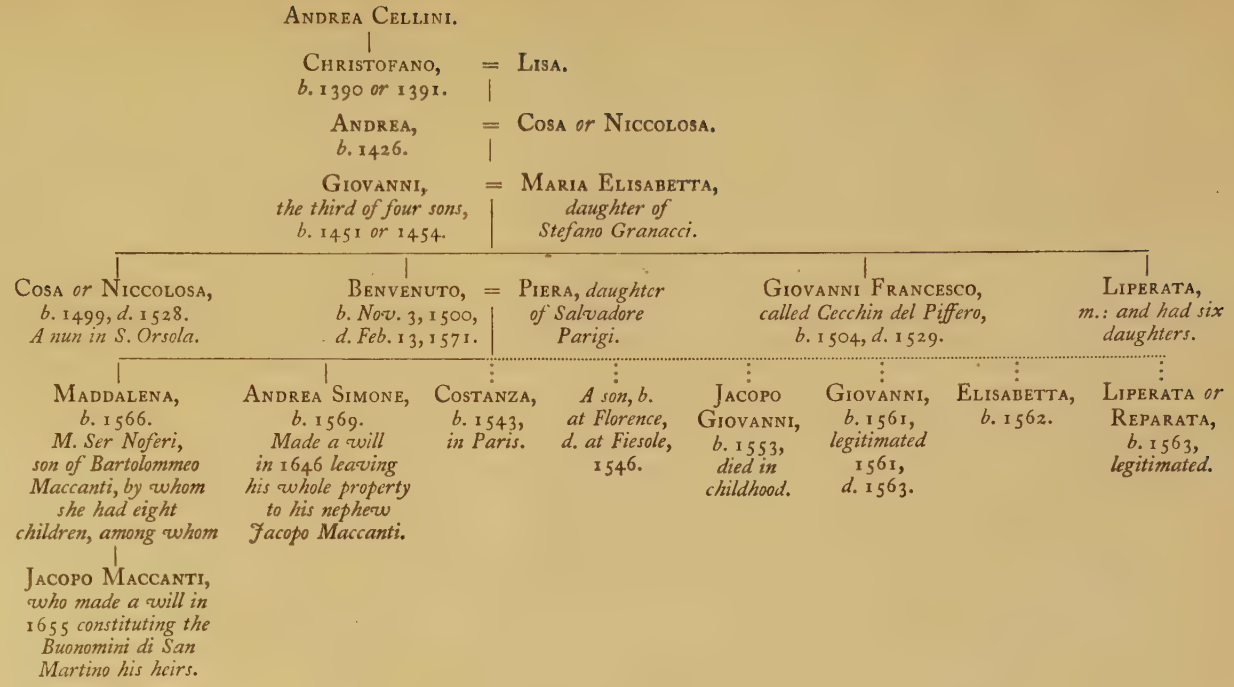
[1] *Bianchi, p.* 501.

[2] *Carpani, vol. ii. p.* 498.

Church of the Annunziata. In the course of the ceremony an oration was delivered "in praise and honour of his life and works, and of the excellent disposition of his soul and body."[1] He left a widow and two legitimate children to deplore his loss.

[1] *Bianchi, p.* 578.

PEDIGREE OF THE CELLINI


Andrea Cellini.
Christofano, b. 1390 or 1391. = Lisa.
Andrea, b. 1426. = Cosa or Niccolosa.
Giovanni, the third of four sons, b. 1451 or 1454. = Maria Elisabetta, daughter of Stefano Granacci.
Cosa or Niccolosa, b. 1499, d. 1528. A nun in S. Orsola.
Benvenuto, b. Nov. 3, 1500, d. Feb. 13, 1571. = Piera, daughter of Salvadore Parigi.
Giovanni Francesco, called Cecchin del Piffero, b. 1504, d. 1529.
Liperata, m.: and had six daughters.
Maddalena, b. 1566. M. Ser Noferi, son of Bartolommeo Maccanti, by whom she had eight children, among whom
Jacopo Maccanti, who made a will in 1655 constituting the Buonomini di San Martino his heirs.
Andrea Simone, b. 1569. Made a will in 1646 leaving his whole property to his nephew Jacopo Maccanti.
Costanza, b. 1543, in Paris.
A son, b. at Florence, d. at Fiesole, 1546.
Jacopo Giovanni, b. 1553, died in childhood.
Giovanni, b. 1561, legitimated 1561, d. 1563.
Elisabetta, b. 1562.
Liperata or Reparata, b. 1563, legitimated.

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